

Reader's digest

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DECEMBER 2015

OUR SPECIAL HOLIDAY ISSUE

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THE BOLD GET REWARDED.

THE **BOLD** NEW CAMRY

It's no wonder that Toyota has been awarded one of the Most Trusted Passenger Cars for 7 years in a row. The Camry's powerful dual VVT-i engine makes every trip exhilarating while the available in-console wireless charging keeps you connected. Complement this with options like the blind spot monitor and rear cross traffic alert, and you get the kind of peace of mind that only a Most Trusted Passenger Car can deliver. For details, visit Toyota.ca



TOYOTA



Editor's Letter

A World of Compassion



OBSERVING CRAIG KIELBURGER at an event in Toronto earlier this year, I was fascinated by his charisma. The minute he arrived, all eyes were on him. At 32, he is a prominent social entrepreneur, but I could still see the passion and conviction that spurred him to launch the charity Free the Children when he was a preteen.

Kielburger is the kind of Canadian we are proud to feature in *Reader's Digest* ("One Life to Give," page 66). When he identifies a problem, he doesn't just say someone should do something—he takes on the task and convinces others to follow. Free the Children has built more than 1,000 schools in Africa and Latin America; Me to We, the organization Kielburger started with his brother, Marc, works with 10,000-plus schools in North America and the United Kingdom and has raised millions of dollars for charity.

Our December issue celebrates another group making a difference in schools. In partnership with the Canadian Education Association, *Reader's Digest* launched the first annual Canadian Innovators in Education Awards. The \$25,000 top prize went to a school district in British Columbia focused on helping educators improve their skills. As one jury member said: "This is not about buying stuff. This is about investing in teachers in a very thoughtful way." To read about all the winners, turn to page 88.

Let these examples inspire you to ask what you can do to change the world. **R**

Send an email
to robert@rd.ca



ROGER AZIZ

BOLD MOVES GET NOTICED.

THE **BOLD** NEW **CAMRY** HYBRID

For the 5th year in a row, Toyota has been named the Most Trusted Hybrid Car Manufacturer. The bold new Toyota Camry Hybrid has had a lot to do with that. It has the power of a V6 engine with the range and efficiency of a 4-cylinder. And with push button start, touchscreen display audio, Bluetooth capability and a power adjustable driver's seat, the road to adventure has never been this rewarding. For details, visit Toyota.ca



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Contributors



DAVE MURRAY

(Illustrator, "The Cost of Green Gold," page 110)

Home base:

Toronto. **Previously published in** *The Wall Street Journal* and *Variety*. **My favourite food trend is** supporting local produce-growing initiatives. I get farm-fresh vegetables delivered to my door twice a month. **I can trace my illustration style** back to when I was seven and I read two *Calvin & Hobbes* comics that included jokes about perspective.



KRISTI GREEN

(Writer, "Fun in Games," page 50)

Home base:

Mulmur, Ont.

Previously published in *Maclean's* and *In the Hills*. **I like to make art**, and luckily, often that involves play. Whether it's writing, painting or singing a song, I still get to kid around a lot. **I'll never age out of** the idea of dress-up. Adulthood comes with its own costumes. Being a grown-up is sometimes like playing a big game.



SUHARU OGAWA

(Illustrator, "Taking Position," page 40)

Home base:

Toronto. **Previously**

published in *The Boston Globe* and *PlanSponsor*. **I was fascinated to learn** that our postures can influence our moods. I'm curious as to what "power stances" might look like in different cultures. **As an illustrator**, I sometimes find myself emotionally influenced by what I'm painting—an image can move its creator as well as its viewers.



NICHOLAS HUNE-BROWN

(Writer, "One Life to Give," page 66)

Home base:

Toronto. **Previously published in** *The Walrus* and *Toronto Life*. **Inter-viewing Craig Kielburger was** hectic. But he was gracious, yelling out answers as the makeup person fiddled with his bangs. **I'd love to profile** Bob Barker. After 50 years on TV, he now rescues animals from zoos and labs in a way that seems very personal—and fascinating.



Surviving looks a lot like thriving

Breast cancer flipped Katherine's world upside down. But in the five years since she underwent treatment, Katherine's been doing some flips of her own.

Thanks to research to discover new treatments, women like Katherine are having their lives put right side up after a cancer diagnosis. That's **why** Stand Up To Cancer Canada and Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation have teamed up to accelerate the pace of research done by collaborative teams of scientists working to develop new treatments faster. Giving more women, like Katherine, their lives back.

To learn more about advances in research, clinical trials testing innovative treatments, and how to get involved, go to standup2cancer.ca/breastcancer and cbcf.org.



Canadian
Breast Cancer
Foundation



Kim Cattrall,
Stand Up To Cancer Canada Ambassador
Katherine Chan, Breast Cancer Survivor

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Letters

READERS COMMENT ON OUR RECENT ISSUES



A DIFFERENT OUTLOOK

Your story “Race Under Fire” (September 2015) was an eye-opener. As a white man living in Nova Scotia, I wasn’t aware of the profiling and carding that often goes on in Canada. In fact, I had never even heard the term “carding.” It’s time for our law enforcers to return to the classroom and develop a new philosophy and attitude.

FRANCIS BEN DeCOSTE, *Antigonish, N.S.*

SIX HAPPY DECADES

I have had a love affair with *Reader's Digest* since I was about nine or 10 years old. I am 76 now. My dad was a subscriber, and as soon as the magazine came into the house, I would read it from cover to cover. Then I'd have to wait a whole month for the next issue! I've learned so much from your little book over the years. I am always impressed by how Robert Goyette squeezes so much style and wisdom into his editor's letter. I've even photocopied one of them!

YOLANDA BROWNE, *Toronto*

SHIFTING VALUES

I was appalled by the responses on August 2015's Finish This Sentence page. Did not one person say their ideal Sunday morning is spent going to church? If not, that is frightening and sad. And if someone did and you did not publish it, that is even more frightening and sad.

MARTHA DARLINGTON, *Stanstead, Que.*

BAD FAITH

In response to the May 2015 cover headline “Why You Trust David Suzuki,” um, I don’t trust him. He says we populate too much, but he

has multiple children. He says we consume too much, but how many homes does he own?

KENTON RIGGS, *on Facebook*

LOVE OF LAUGHTER

Reading your magazine makes my day! Whenever I have a rough week, I like to curl up with an issue. Please don't stop putting in funny quotes and jokes here and there. Thank you, *Reader's Digest*. I am so happy to have a subscription.

MARY ANN THOMAS, *Abbotsford, B.C.*

SPACE FOR SOLITUDE

I really appreciated the story "One Is the Loveliest Number" (October 2015). I am alone 99.9 per cent of the time. I can't stand drama, and I enjoy spending the day by myself. The peace is so nice.

MARYANNE DAWSON-CALDWELL,
Kamloops, B.C.

FULL CONFIDENCE

In your special feature in your June 2015 issue, there was a list of the top five professions Canadians trust the

most. I think you forgot to mention the air traffic controllers at Nav Canada. Our 4,000-plus staff can be trusted to keep the skies over our country safe 24 hours a day. People forget that we even exist—which means we must be doing a great job.

BRUCE ORPWOOD, *Toronto*

STEADY COMPANION

Reader's Digest is the first magazine I reach for whenever I'm in a waiting room. I love the jokes in *Laughter*, the Best Medicine!

LAURA KING, *on Facebook*

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES

I was so excited to read the story "Better Together" (August 2015). I'd submitted an anecdote about my great neighbour, John Shurko—the handsome dude on the cover—never expecting I would see him featured front and centre. How wonderful!

DAWN WELTON, *on Facebook* 

Published letters are edited for length and clarity.

We want to hear from you! Have something to say about an article you read in *Reader's Digest*? Send your letters to letters@rd.ca. Please include your full name and address.

Contribute Send us your funny jokes and anecdotes, and if we publish one in a print edition of *Reader's Digest*, we'll send you a free one-year subscription. To submit, visit rd.ca/joke.

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My favourite holiday memory is...

...setting up the Christmas tree when my kids were little, and **having a picnic underneath it.**

BEV GEDDES, SASKATOON



...my husband proposing to me on Christmas Eve.

We were facing a nine-hour delay, waiting for our flight home.

BARBARA MARSH,
CALABOGIE, ONT.

...travelling to New York City

when I was 10.

I remember gazing at the storefront windows in awe. "Magical" would be an understatement.

TOM J. ORCHARD,
KELOWNA, B.C.

...when Mom and Dad surprised us with an **Alouette snowmobile.**

We had a hard time riding our present around the yard—it was a green Christmas in Mississauga, Ont.!

RHONDA DROVER BEIRNES, LISTOWEL, ONT.

...Christmas 1955,

finding a little golden cocker spaniel under the tree. My grandfather sat up all night with the pup so it wouldn't wake me.

SUSAN JAMES, NORTH VANCOUVER



...making root beer,

my family's Christmas tradition!

MICHELLE SYLVIA VOYAGEUR,
PRINCE GEORGE, B.C.

 Visit the Reader's Digest Canada Facebook page for your chance to finish the next sentence.

A flat-lay photograph of various travel items including clothing, a camera, a hat, and a green TD Bank card, with a green text box overlaid. The items are arranged on a light-colored, textured surface. The text box contains the text: "Heading south? We make it easier to pack a U.S. based TD Bank account."

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VOICES & VIEWS

Nathalie Maione provides furniture and household goods to people in need

Rooms of Their Own

BY SHELLEY PAGE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DERRICK RICE

 **NATHALIE MAIONE** AWOKE in her Ottawa home on an unseasonably warm morning this past September imagining a sunny, modern living room. In it, she pictured a woman, maybe a refugee, who'd lost everything—and whose hope might be restored by her surroundings. Later that day, in the city's east end, Maione dug through a gigantic warehouse, hunting for pieces to complete the image in her mind: two yellow wooden chairs and a bistro table, plus a low white couch.

The bistro table proved elusive, but Maione, the founder of the charity Helping With Furniture, knew she

had seen it somewhere. She wove through stacked boxes filled with toasters, kettles and can openers. "There it is!" she cried, spotting the missing item on a top shelf.

For the past decade, the 54-year-old has reached out to more than 1,000 people in the Ottawa area—refugees, victims of domestic violence, people struggling with illness and addiction—to outfit their homes and give them a reason to believe in new beginnings.

"The people we help have lost their sense of self—they are broken," says Maione. "To them, this is kind of like winning the lottery. ➤➤

*"I want to give them hope,"
says Nathalie Maione of
the families served by her
Ottawa charity, Helping
With Furniture.*



Something good happens in their lives, and that could mean other good things are going to happen.”

Maione launched the charity in 2005, after meeting Elizabeth Rapley, who had been providing settlement assistance to refugees since the 1950s. Rapley needed a hand delivering furniture to a family; Maione had a 15-seater van. And so Helping With Furniture began. “I wanted to build on Elizabeth’s work, her dream,” says Maione. These days, Rapley, now 84, lends support by gathering and folding linens.

Every Wednesday evening, after Maione gets home from her job as an early-childhood educator at an elementary school, the mother of six climbs behind the wheel of a moving van dubbed the “Yellow Canary” and leads a convoy of volunteers across the city. First they pick up donations, then they sort, and finally they transport items to the three homes on that night’s list. Drop-offs can last well past midnight. Maione’s helpers include retirees, students from area high schools and Algonquin College’s interior design program, and refugees-turned-volunteers.

In 2011, Saada K. fled Djibouti, a small country in the Horn of Africa, with her now-husband and their eight-month-old son. “We are not the same tribe, and we could not get married, but we had a baby,” she says. “We were in danger.”

Once in Ottawa, she heard about the charity and connected with Maione, who lent her a cooktop to make baby food. Soon, Saada started distributing furniture—and eventually received some of her own.

In 10 years—520 Wednesdays—Maione hasn’t missed a delivery. Some of her memories: a boy jumping on his new couch, shouting, “This is a miracle!” A homeless man thanking her for the gift of a bike. Bringing a loveseat to a Rwandan genocide survivor who, along with her daughter, was raped, after her husband was murdered and her son buried alive.

“That woman is one of my motivators,” says Maione. “Sometimes I’m tired and my back hurts, and then I think of how much courage she has to have to keep going. Why should I lack the courage to go on?”

The \$30,000-plus a year needed to keep Maione’s initiative afloat comes mainly from fundraising. There are 60 recipients on the organization’s waiting list, most referred by municipal and provincial agencies, though Helping With Furniture obtains no government support.

Not long ago, a refugee from Nigeria—a former child bride with a teenage son—received the yellow chairs, white couch and bistro table, along with throw pillows, a coffee table and two bicycles. That night, Maione got to bed at 3 a.m.—and began dreaming of her next delivery.

R

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Laughter

THE BEST MEDICINE



THE BEST JOKE I EVER TOLD BY JULIEN DIONNE

I accidentally walked in on a guy having a shower after yoga class. He was not the least bit fazed. "Namaste," he said, as I opened the shower curtain. I closed it and replied, "Nah, 'ma go."

The Julien Dionne Comedy Hour podcast is available on iTunes or at jdcomedyhour.com.



A FOR EFFORT

I told my friend 10 jokes in an attempt to make him laugh.

Sadly, no pun in 10 did. reddit.com

VERY IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

Q: What did the green grape say to the purple grape?

A: OMG! BREATHE! BREATHEEEEE!!!

reddit.com

Q: What did the Tin Man say when he got run over by a steamroller?

A: Curses! Foil again!

PAUL STEWART, via Internet

Q: What do Alexander the Great and Winnie the Pooh have in common?

A: Same middle name. reddit.com

YOU DO YOU

Sometimes I tuck my knees into my chest and lean forward.

That's just how I roll. reddit.com

CONTEST RULES

What do you mean I didn't win? I ate more wet T-shirts than anyone else.

 **@PEACHCOFFIN**

Send us an original joke, and it could mean a free year's subscription. See page 13 or rd.ca/joke for details.

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[†]while supplies last.

Illusionist Darcy Oake on suspending disbelief, working with birds and protecting the tricks of the trade

Magic Man

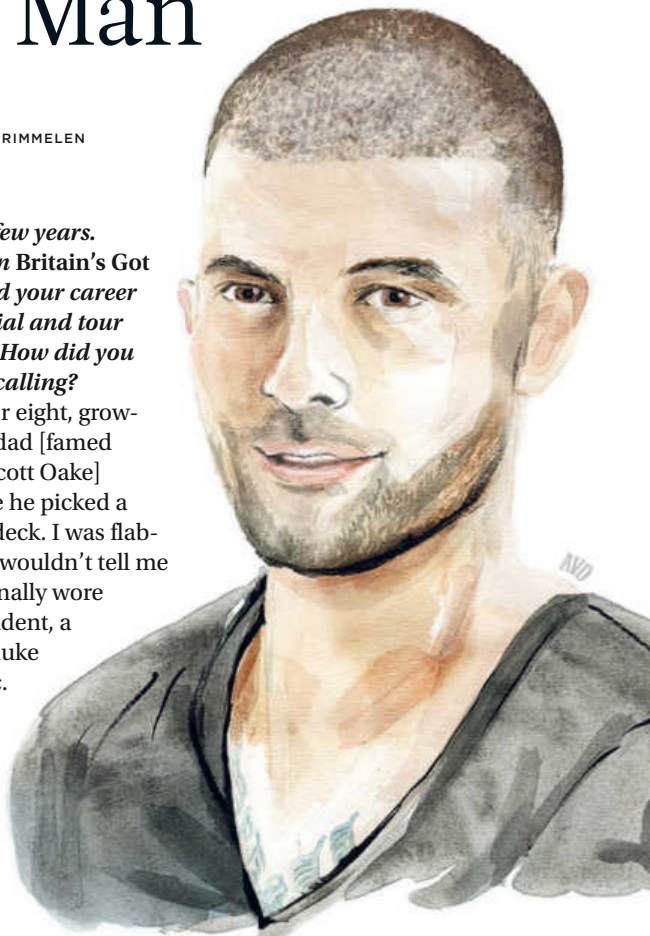
BY MEGAN JONES

ILLUSTRATION BY AIMÉE VAN DRIMMELEN

You've had an eventful few years. You were a contestant on Britain's Got Talent and you launched your career overseas with a TV special and tour in the United Kingdom. How did you realize magic was your calling?

Back when I was seven or eight, growing up in Winnipeg, my dad [famed Manitoba sportscaster Scott Oake] showed me a trick where he picked a card I'd chosen out of a deck. I was flabbergasted. For weeks he wouldn't tell me how he'd done it, but I finally wore him down: it was an accident, a one-in-52 chance. So a fluke got me hooked on magic.

You were competing in international magic competitions by the age of 16. What was it like to grow up in that world?



I used to go to monthly meet-ups as a teen during the early 2000s. You're probably hoping I'll say we gathered in, like, some dark old church. But no, we met in a community-centre room to mingle and talk shop. Older magic guys would lend me VHS tapes to learn from. Mentorship has been important to me since then. When I see someone trying to learn, I go out of my way to help.

What about your peers? Did you ever get flak for being "that magic kid"?

I went through a phase in junior high and high school when I didn't want to tell anyone I was trying to be a magician because I knew people would think I was a weirdo. But even then I believed it had the power to be really, really cool.

The stereotypical magician can be pretty cheesy.

I've never understood magicians who go up there in top hats and tailcoats and sequined jackets. Like, it's 2015. Nobody dresses like that.

One of your most famous tricks involves doves. What are the hazards of working with birds? Poop? Feathers?

That's only the start of it! One time I had a dove fly into the audience, land in a lady's lap, lay an egg and then fly back to the stage.

And I was like, *Oookay*. I couldn't do that on purpose if I wanted to.

Is it difficult to keep trade secrets from your nearest and dearest?

A lot of the time it's hard because I find the way a trick works just as cool as the actual result. It's unfortunate I can't tell anybody about the process. But that's the price you pay. A magician never reveals his secrets.

Why is magic so compelling even after we supposedly become old enough to know better?

The answer is in the question. We think we know how everything works, and if we don't know, Google will tell us. But magic, when done correctly, allows you to connect with a person and show them something impossible they can't explain. It's a powerful thing.

Some of your stunts seem incredibly dangerous, like hanging upside down inside a bear trap. What's it like to put yourself in peril?

It's a funny mind space. Part of me is like, "This is stupid. I don't know why I'm doing it." Another part is like, "This is going to be fantastic if it works." And a third part is like, "If this goes horribly wrong, at least I'll go out like a legend."



Darcy Oake will be touring across Canada until Dec. 4.



A best man faces the ultimate wedding challenge: posing for the perfect picture

Photo Finished

BY IAIN REID

FROM *THE NEW YORKER*

ILLUSTRATION BY BRANDON CELI



NOW THAT THE BRIDE and groom are done, and the parents are done, and the brothers and sisters, and the bridesmaids and grooms-men, the cute nieces and nephews, the ushers, the grandparents, and the groups of people jumping in unison, I just need a photo of the best man.

Has anyone seen the best man? Okay, he's right here. Great.

Remember, the most important thing is to be comfortable. Just be yourself!

Let's try it with you standing over there, near the fence, maybe a hand on your hip, and pretend that I'm

not here. Not so stiff. Relax. Just act natural. There you go. Perfect!

Okay, you should probably smile.

Right, well, it'd be nice if we could see the smile. A real smile. A little more sincere, if possible. Is that your normal smile? Are you thinking of something funny? Try thinking of something funny and/or beautiful. Think about the meaning of marriage. That's why we're here!

Or maybe try thinking of something that makes you happy. Do you need a moment?

Good, but don't open your mouth *quite* so much. Even less. Yep. Less.

And I'm wondering if you can unscrunch your forehead a tad.

That's great!

How about walking a little way into that field? That one, right there. Exactly, the cornfield. I'm not even here. Just do what you would normally do in a cornfield!

If you don't mind, try taking off your shoes. For sure—socks, too! Can you straighten your shoulders a bit? Look to the side. And down. Look down *and* to the side. Not so serious. Don't move your head. Open your eyes a bit more? Wider, if possible. There, but don't do that with your nose. Nostrils unflared, please. You're still squinting.

Why don't you pick up that old pitchfork? Amazing! Now hold it as nonchalantly as you can, as if you've just finished some pitchforking. Try raising it over your head, though. No, not like that. No. No. Up. Higher. A bit higher. Get the fork part up even higher, if you can. And what about swivelling your hips to the left, just a touch? No, *your* left. The other way. Don't lower it! Can you put your right leg forward? Bend the knee. That's good. Keep smiling! How's your back?

It is warm in the sun, yeah. Wipe off your face if you want. No, I'm not so much worried about your forehead being shiny; it's more the rivulets of sweat.

How about, I don't know, rolling up your pants to the knees? Maybe grab that long piece of grass there, and stick it in the side of your mouth. Not to chew, just to have it in there. But more laid-back. Don't put the pitchfork down!

Loosen your tie a bit. Not that much. Yeah, and take a couple steps back. Let's try sitting down in that old wheelbarrow behind you. Get right up in there. Just like that. Maybe crouch a bit more. You got it! And throw your legs over the rim, casually.

Ouch. Yikes. But it doesn't look too deep. I'm sure someone has Band-Aids. Is there a lot of broken glass in the wheelbarrow? Good to know.

How about with the jacket off? Awesome! Now sling it over your right shoulder. Not so much like a cape. Keep your elbow up. Not in front of your face, beside it. Keep holding it! Let the jacket fall naturally, if you can.

Now with your chin raised. No, it's sort of braced against your shoulder. Even higher. Keep breathing, though!

Is there any chance you can bring your hands together in front of your chest and form the shape of a heart with them? That looks more like a kidney. Can you steady them? They're shaking a lot.

Hold that, hold that! Right there! That's *so* cute! That's great!

Oh, you blinked on that one. Let's try again.



Points to Ponder

BY CHRISTINA PALASSIO

I'm not saying that doping is right. I'm just saying that there is more to the scenario than somebody just cheating. And based on how drugs in the sport have affected my track career, I should be infuriated by people using performance enhancers. But I'm not.



Former competitive sprinter **ANSON HENRY**, on CBC Sports

A myth is not a lie, as such, but only the truth in size 12 shoes. Its gestures are wider, its voice is projected further, its face has bolder features than reality would dare contrive.

Author **TIMOTHY FINDLEY**, in his book *Journeyman: Travels of a Writer*

The Northwest Territories [are] already over 2 C warmer than [they were] 50 years ago. Our dippy roads, tippy houses and cliffhanging lakes are such physical evidence of change that I haven't encountered a climate-change denier since moving to the North four years ago.

DR. COURTNEY HOWARD, a *Yellowknife ER physician*, in the *National Observer*

You know what's amazing about how the universe works? Sometimes, when you don't get what you want, you're actually dodging a bullet.

Comedian **CANDY PALMATER**, on Twitter

I know my neighbours. You know how? I walk. I rarely get in a car on weekends.

Toronto chief planner **JENNIFER KEESMAAT**, in *Toronto Life*



PHOTOS: (HENRY) © 2015 RUNNERSPACE.COM; (KEESMAAT) OWNYOURCITY.CA; QUOTES: (HENRY) AUG. 2015; (FINDLEY) © 2003 HARPERCOLLINS; (HOWARD) AUG. 4, 2015; (PALMATER) AUG. 24, 2015; (KEESMAAT) AUG. 2015.



I am plagued and pained by the violence that continues to escalate in our city. I stare into the eyes of so many young people, and I wish to see them all shine as bright as they possibly can in this lifetime.

Rapper DRAKE in response to a shooting after the music event OVO Fest in Toronto

It's a very modern phenomenon to marry for love [and that] you have to be monogamous. Who made that determination? I don't know that any research was put into it.

NOEL BIDERMAN, founder of affair website *Ashley Madison*, which became mired in scandal after hackers released users' personal data

We know the structure of work is changing so dramatically that many people are not going to have a job with a company for a period of time and be able to build up savings in a company plan. Therefore, a universal plan like the CPP is actually incredibly important.

Former Bank of Canada governor DAVID DODGE on the Ontario government's retirement pension plan

Sometimes, the only way for me to get a woman to run is to tell her that the seat is unwinnable. Then she'll do it because she believes in the party or she cares about a particular issue, because she won't do it for her own ambition.



NDP national director ANNE McGRATH, in *Chatelaine*

I can't remember ever thinking, God, I can't wait for some prince to scoop me up. I think princesses are just these characters. They're young, they have a lot of choices, they have autonomy, and people listen to them when they talk.

Cartoonist KATE BEATON, author of the kids' book *The Princess and the Pony* 

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ART *of* LIVING

The remarkable science behind
how—and why—we bond with others

Making Connections

BY DANIELLE GROEN

ILLUSTRATIONS BY VICTOR WONG



 IN THE PAST 25 YEARS, numerous scientific studies and reviews have shown us what, exactly, friends are for: they slash our risk of mortality in half, double our chances of recovering from depression, make us 4.2 times less likely to succumb to the common cold. They're even, according to England's University of Oxford psychologist Robin Dunbar, responsible for our massive brains—we need that neural power to keep track of our various complex relationships. (Dunbar found that the biggest predictor of a primate's brain size is the magnitude of its social group.)

But what's happening inside our hefty noggins? If there's tremendous evolutionary value in social attachment, could we be wired to develop those bonds? Recent neurological research suggests that's the case.

That warm, fuzzy feeling

Naomi Eisenberger, a professor of social psychology at University of California, Los Angeles, wanted to know if there was any literal truth to the language we use to describe social connection—that, for example, it makes us feel warm-hearted. For a 2013 study published in *Psychological Science*, she had half the participants hold a heat pack and half hold an unheated ball. Unsurprisingly, members of the former group registered more activity in regions that detect and reward physical warmth.

Then Eisenberger gathered messages from the participants' families and friends. Half of these were loving; the rest contained factual statements about the party in question. When the subjects, who were being monitored by way of a brain scan, read the tender messages for the first time, “the same neural regions were active as with the heat packs,” Eisenberger says. “We know how important it is to have relationships, and we are borrowing from those brain regions that are associated with warmth to signal to us when we feel connected.”

Like attracts like

It turns out birds of a feather don't just flock together—they actually resemble each other genetically. That's the remarkable finding of a 2014 study by Nicholas A. Christakis, a physician and sociologist at Yale University in Connecticut, and James Fowler, a professor of medical genetics and political science at the University of California at San Diego. The researchers examined 466,608 genetic markers from subjects who were identified as being in one or more of 1,367 friendship pairs, and they discovered that “friends may be a kind of ‘functional kin,’” they write. More specifically, close buddies resemble fourth cousins, with the same resemblance in genetic makeup as those who share great-great-great-grandparents.



After they dug into the data, Christakis and Fowler saw that pals were more likely to have similar senses of smell. That won't come as a surprise to anyone who's struck up a friendship at a coffee shop or musty old bookstore. As the authors write, "It is possible that individuals who smell things in the same way are drawn to similar environments." What we don't share is even more intriguing: friends have significantly different immune systems. When it comes to the spread of infection, that makes some clear anthropological sense. It's nice to have company. It's even nicer if that company doesn't leave you with a deadly disease.

Mirror game

So if we know why we seek social connection and with whom, then what keeps us together? In a July 2015 study for *Human Brain Mapping*, researchers at the Rotman Research Institute in Toronto took that question to a group whose members were in a unique position

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READER'S DIGEST

to answer it: happy couples married for an average of 40 years.

Psychologist Raluca Petrican scanned the brains of 14 wives while they viewed silent videos of their spouses recalling positive experiences (wedding, birth of a child) and negative ones (illness, death of a parent). The catch? The videos were mislabelled, so the emotions the wives saw conflicted with the descriptions they'd been given.

When the women watched their cheerful husbands describe a supposedly sombre event, they registered increased, spontaneous activity in regions containing mirror neurons, which are critical for establishing empathy. "It helps to be particularly attuned to the silver lining that your partner sees in a really dark time," Petrican says. But when their spouses showed negative emotions toward a presumably joyful time, the women inhibited their responsiveness to those emotions—they made their mirror neurons go quiet. "Otherwise, the wives would start to doubt an otherwise positive event that is foundational to their sense of intimacy," Petrican explains. The greater her reported marital satisfaction, the stronger a woman's ability to inhibit her response.

The surprising take-away: when it comes to preserving our friendships and our relationships, sometimes ignorance really is bliss. **R**



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Tips on dealing with heartburn

Putting Out the Fire

BY SAMANTHA RIDEOUT

IF GOOGLE SEARCHES are to be believed, heartburn—that searing sensation behind the breast-bone—is as common a concern for most of us as hiccups. Although it can happen for mysterious reasons, the condition is usually the result of acid reflux (which is when gastric acid trespasses in the esophagus, the tube going from the mouth to the stomach). Unlike the stomach itself, the esophagus has no built-in protection against the acid that dissolves your food.

It is possible to mistake heartburn for a heart attack, even though the quality of the chest pain brought on

by the latter is often described as “aching,” “squeezing” or “pressure” rather than simply “burning.” When in doubt, err on the side of seeking medical attention.

Normally, occasional heartburn is nothing to worry about. However, “If you suffer from heartburn most days for three weeks or more, you should visit your doctor, as it could be a sign of stomach or esophageal cancer,” says United European Gastroenterology expert and University of Cambridge professor Rebecca Fitzgerald.

Otherwise, lifestyle changes may bring relief. First, some wardrobe tips: avoid overly tight belts, “control”



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underwear or any other garments that squeeze the midsection—they can force food and acid back up into your esophagus. Next, try to manage your triggers. Items that can aggravate chronic heartburn include alcohol (which relaxes the lower esophageal sphincter, the “door” that keeps the acid out), coffee, cola, citrus, onions, fatty fare and spicy dishes. Certain drugs, including ibuprofen and Aspirin, can also increase severity.

Consider not only your diet but also your dining habits. Don't eat

too quickly or too much, and allow a couple of hours for digestion between dinner and bed-time—lying down can press food

against the esophageal sphincter.

Should these measures fail to prevent heartburn, you can treat the condition with an over-the-counter antacid. Talk to your doctor if you're taking them

regularly, however: long-term continuous use may cause side effects (such as kidney stones), and there are prescription drugs available for chronic cases.

R

5 million

Canadians experience heartburn at least once a week on average.

News From the World of Medicine

Music Soothes Post-Surgery Pain and Anxiety

Patients who listen to music after undergoing surgery tend to feel less anxious and have less post-operative

pain, according to a systematic review out of London, England, that weighed evidence from 73 studies. By way of illustration, one of the review's authors maintained that listening to Pink Floyd's *Dark*

Side of the Moon helped her relax in the hours following a recent hip operation. Given that music is inexpensive, non-invasive and safe, there is little to lose by playing favourite tunes to aid in recovery.



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Stroke Survivors' Spouses at Risk of Poor Health

In a nod to the stresses of caregiving, Swedish researchers looked at the health-related quality of life of 248 stroke survivors' partners—not only in the stroke's immediate aftermath but also seven years later. Compared to a control group of 245, the spouses scored worse in such areas as body pain, social functioning and mental health—especially when their loved ones were disabled. The findings underline the need to find long-lasting ways to support families impacted by strokes.

Seniors Report Superior Sleep Quality

A study out of Switzerland's University of Lausanne examining the sleeping patterns of people aged 40 to 80 found that on average, the more advanced subjects were in years, the more satisfied they were with their shut-eye. Getting older was also correlated with a decreased likelihood of reporting excessive daytime sleepiness. The authors concluded, "Sleep complaints should not be viewed as part of normal aging but should prompt the identification of underlying causes."

"On Call" Duties Outside Work Hours Take Toll

Mobile phones and laptops let us work from just about anywhere at any

time. But this convenience has a dark side, according to a German team that recently investigated the effect of "extended work availability" on cortisol levels. When someone is expected to respond to job-related requests beyond normal work hours, this "cannot be considered leisure time," the scientists claimed. Since it impairs recovery from work, constant availability leaves the employee in a more stressed state the next morning. **R**



TEST YOUR MEDICAL IQ

Orthostatic hypotension is...

- A.** A raised heart rate due to chronic stress
- B.** Light-headedness caused by a lack of sodium
- C.** Lowered blood pressure caused by standing up
- D.** Poor circulation in the hands and feet

Answer: C. Orthostatic hypotension is temporarily lowered blood pressure resulting from blood pooling in your legs after you stand up. It can make you feel dizzy or light-headed. If the sensation lasts beyond a few minutes or leads to fainting, it may point to a condition such as heart disease or uncontrolled diabetes.

EXPERIENCING DISCOMFORT FROM SENSITIVE TEETH?

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DO YOU HAVE SUDDEN JOLTS OF PAIN WHEN YOU DRINK HOT COFFEE, EAT ICE CREAM, OR ENJOY A SWEET TREAT? EVEN BREATHING THROUGH YOUR MOUTH CAN BE UNCOMFORTABLE WHEN YOU HAVE SENSITIVE TEETH.

As you begin to age, your gums can shrink back (recede), and as a result your teeth may become more sensitive.

Over time, exposure to acidic foods can wear away tooth enamel, which also can make teeth sensitive. When you have sensitive teeth it's even more important that you do a thorough cleaning. You have to clean all of those hard to reach areas so you're not leaving germs behind—especially as you age because you're more susceptible to problems with your teeth and gums.

The key to preventing the pain of sensitive teeth and keeping your gums healthy is good oral hygiene that includes brushing, flossing and rinsing.

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5 TIPS FOR PEOPLE WITH TOOTH SENSITIVITY



1. BRUSH GENTLY TWICE A DAY

Brushing too aggressively can wear down the enamel, injure gums, and expose tooth roots.



2. FLOSS AT LEAST ONCE A DAY

You're missing more than a third of your tooth surface if you don't.



3. LIMIT STARCHES AND SUGARS.

Acidic foods and drinks can wear away tooth enamel.



4. VISIT YOUR DENTAL PROFESSIONAL

Regular professional exams and cleanings help detect and prevent problems. Your

dentist can recommend an appropriate oral care routine for sensitive teeth.



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Transform your mood
with your moves

Taking Position

BY KATE ALLEN

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SUHARU OGAWA

THE MIND-BODY connection is so powerful that our faces convey our thoughts, even when we try to mask them. Knowing that, researchers have trained doctors, spies and CEOs to read “micro expressions,” the fleeting emotions we broadcast.

Can we influence wellness by thinking about the mind-body connection in the opposite way?

Research has repeatedly shown that body movements and facial expressions can change how we interpret the world around us. In one 2003 study, scientists at Ohio State University and the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid told participants they were there to test



headphones in order to trick them into nodding or shaking their heads while they listened to an editorial. Participants who were asked to shake

their heads in disapproval were less convinced by poor arguments, while the participants who were asked to nod to signal approval were more convinced by the strong ones.

Richard Petty, a co-author of that study, advises people to nod as they rehearse positivity and shake their heads if negativity creeps in. "Some people think positive thoughts, but they don't have confidence in them," he says. "Sit up straight, nod your head and you can almost feel it. It's like, 'This is right.'"

Recently, scientists have begun to study how whole-body movements can transform mood. In a 2010 study led by researchers at Columbia and Harvard universities, 42 participants were asked to hold either expansive poses associated with power or constricted poses associated with powerlessness. (One power pose involved standing and leaning forward against a desk with hands shoulder-width apart and palms down; one powerless

pose involved standing with feet crossed and arms in a self-hug.)

After just two minutes in those stances, there were psychological changes: the power posers felt more

powerful and took more risks in a gambling game. But there were also physical changes: the subjects who adopted powerless poses had higher levels of the stress hormone cortisol and lower levels of testosterone.

If standing tall and smiling big alter confidence and happi-

ness, then why not use them to boost your confidence? Harvard Business School researcher Amy Cuddy, a co-author of the 2010 study, points out that power poses get results all over the animal kingdom. For humans, she recommends

standing straight with feet apart and your hands on your hips, Wonder Woman-style, or leaning back in a chair with legs straight and your arms behind your head. Whatever the pose, take up some space and convey a sense of well-being. **R**

“

In a 2010 study, subjects who adopted powerless poses had higher levels of the stress hormone cortisol.



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Ask your Shoppers Drug Mart Pharmacist about products that can help you and your family feel better this Cough and Cold season.

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ASK YOUR PHARMACIST ABOUT COLD & FLU SYMPTOM RELIEF

Falling leaves, plunging temperatures, and dwindling hours of daylight signal the arrival of cold and flu season.

Viruses can spread easily at this time of year because we spend more time together indoors. A sneeze or cough from an infected individual can send airborne droplets into the air. Breathed in, these droplets could make you sick.

Speak with your Shoppers Drug Mart Pharmacist for more advice on how to help protect yourself this cold and flu season.

SORE THROAT? Dissolve about a half-teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water and gargle for soothing relief. Gargling with salt water can temporarily relieve the pain of an itchy or scratchy throat.

IF YOU'RE FEELING CONGESTED, talk to your Pharmacist about products that contain decongestants like pseudoephedrine, which may help with the discomfort. You could also try a nasal spray such as Otrivin® Saline for relief of blocked nasal passages.

The #1 way to prevent the flu is to get your flu shot. For more information, speak to your Shoppers Drug Mart Pharmacist or go to shoppersdrugmart.ca/flushot

CAN'T STOP COUGHING? Try drinking hot water with lemon or look for lozenges that help provide temporary relief from cough and soothe minor throat irritation.

NEED MULTI-SYMPTOM RELIEF? Have a hot bowl of chicken soup for temporary relief. Drink as much water as you can and run a humidifier in your room to keep the air moist. Your Pharmacist can also help you find a medication that can help bring relief for a variety of symptoms.

DOES COLD WEATHER MEAN COLD SORES FOR YOU? Though cold sores are not a symptom of a cold or flu (they are usually caused by Herpes simplex 1 virus), colder weather can trigger an outbreak. Apply a cool compress to help reduce redness and keep your pucker moisturized by using a lip balm with SPF. Shorten healing time with abreva®.



These products may not be right for you. Always read and follow the label.

*An untreated cold sore can last up to 10 days. The median time to heal a cold sore with abreva® is 4.1 days.

SHOPPERS
DRUG MART 

Charting the rise of
inflammatory bowel disease

Gut Feeling

BY SAMANTHA RIDEOUT

ILLUSTRATION BY TRACY WALKER



INFLAMMATION EVOLVED for a reason: it's part of the body's way of fighting off pathogens. But sometimes, for reasons that are not quite understood, that natural response runs amok, causing chronic inflammatory diseases. These ailments can affect different areas, including ones we often avoid in polite conversation. Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) is the umbrella term for conditions that involve chronic swelling in the digestive tract. There are two main varieties: ulcerative colitis, which results from inflammation and ulcers in the lining of the colon and rectum; and Crohn's disease, which is when swollen patches occur in the tissue that lines any part of the digestive tract. Both of these conditions can lead to abdominal pain,

diarrhea, bloody stool, fatigue and weight loss.

Despite the resemblance between their names, IBD is not the same as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), a more common but less serious condition. The two share certain symptoms, but IBS does not involve inflammation or any visible changes to the digestive tract.

44

Percentage of Canadians with IBD who have had an accident because they weren't able to access a public restroom in time.

IBD is a lifelong disease, usually starting in early adulthood. Patients face symptoms that come and go (flares, remissions) and, on occasion, social stigma due to a lack of understanding about IBD.

Inflammation-fighting medications can shorten and reduce the intensity of flares. For Crohn's patients, surgically removing or bypassing the damaged areas can provide long-term relief, though the

disease may return to attack previously unaffected tissue. For colitis, the most common procedure is replacing the colon and rectum with synthetic substitutes, which is typically a permanent cure.

In decades past, Canada had a relatively low occurrence of IBD compared to similar Western countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States. But since the 1980s, IBD's prevalence has grown faster here than it has elsewhere. We now have one of the highest rates in the world—as of March of this year, 240,000 Canadians were living with the condition.

So far, the exact causes of IBD remain unknown. Although there is evidence of genetic risk factors, most sufferers don't have a family history. The Canadian-born children of immigrants from various

regions with low IBD rates—South Asia, for example—run the same risk that non-immigrant families do, which suggests that the rise in IBD may be associated with Canada's environment or lifestyle.

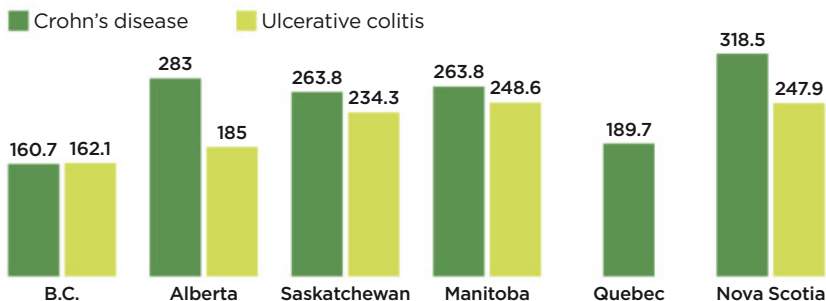
The non-genetic factors suggested have included hyper hygiene: insufficient exposure to various microbes that naturally live inside and regulate a healthy gut.

That hypothesis might help shed light on why IBD is more prevalent in Western cities than in the less sterile countryside—and why it's rampant in Canada, where at least 81 per cent of us are urbanites. Other possible causes: artificial sweeteners (which can inhibit gut bacteria) and excessive antibiotic use. But for now, the jury is still out as to why inflamed bowels are so common within our borders.



PROVINCIAL* PREVALENCE RATES

PER 100,000 PEOPLE



*Provinces not shown have not collected IBD data in recent years.

The calming power
of colouring books

Fine Lines

BY CHRISTINA PALASSIO



THEY TOP BESTSELLER lists around the globe, selling millions of copies each year. Once considered child's play, colouring books are now wildly popular among adults—and the craze continues to grow.

Enthusiasts say the hobby helps them cope with stress, anxiety and depression. While experts emphasize that colouring isn't the same as art therapy, there is evidence that the act's repetitive nature can release tension. Some people are soothed by the meditative focus required to fill in intricate patterns and landscapes. Some appreciate the low-pressure creative outlet and feel rewarded when they complete pages. Others just enjoy feeling like a kid again.

There's an option for every taste and style. Scottish artist Johanna Basford helped launch the trend with 2013's *Secret Garden*, a collection of

ornate floral images. For a different experience, there's *Thrill Murray*, published by the British collective Belly Kids, which revisits scenes from the career of actor Bill Murray.

Fantastic Cities, a new title by Ontario illustrator Steve McDonald, brings users on an urban joyride. The aerial views of real and imagined cities are a stunning survey of human-made environments, from the streets of Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., (pictured above) to a *favela* in Rio de Janeiro.

"I like the idea that, because the drawings are so detailed and because of the time it takes to colour each page, people are giving some thought to architectural styles and patterns," says McDonald. "This book is the story of our human habitat and our history on the planet, of how we build dwellings and how we do it differently in different places."



STEVE McDONALD



Nutritional fine print, decoded

Label-Conscious

BY ALISON KENT FROM BEST HEALTH

SERVING SIZE

The first place to look when perusing label information is the serving size. Located directly under the “Nutrition Facts” title at the top of the list, it displays the amount of fat, calories and nutrients you’re consuming. Compare the specific amount of food displayed on the

label to what you’re actually eating; these portions can be quite different, so calculate accordingly.

% DAILY VALUE

This figure helps you evaluate whether there is a little or a lot of a nutrient in what you are about to consume. For instance, a 10 per

cent daily value (DV) of fibre means one serving of that food provides 10 per cent of the fibre you should consume in one day. The quick rule is, five per cent DV or less is a little, and 15 per cent DV or more is a lot. (So look for less than five per cent for something like sodium but over 15 per cent for something like fibre.) Daily values for carbohydrates, total fat, saturated fat and trans fat are based on a 2,000-calorie-a-day diet. Daily values for the remaining nutrients apply to most people, regardless of caloric needs.

CALORIES

In Canada, calories and 13 core nutrients are always listed in the same descending order. The number of calories enumerated lets you know how much energy you will derive from one serving of this food. Keeping the 2,000-calorie-a-day guideline in mind, factor in how many servings of this particular food you should reasonably consume.

FAT, INCLUDING SATURATED AND TRANS

When it comes to food, not all fats are created equal. For instance, omega-3 fats (polyunsaturated),

like those found in fish, and mono-unsaturated fats, like those found in avocados, are considered healthy, with benefits for your heart. Aim to consume less saturated and trans fats—the top two types that can raise LDL, or “bad” blood cholesterol levels. Current guidelines recommend making sure that no more than 10 per cent of the fat you consume on a daily basis is saturated or trans (20 grams

for a 2,000-calorie diet). Keep total fat to less than 65 grams.

CHOLESTEROL

While only some people (such as diabetics) need to worry in earnest about their dietary cholesterol intake, the best way to control blood cholesterol is to choose foods that are

lower in saturated and trans fats. The recommended daily intake of dietary cholesterol is no more than 300 milligrams a day, while the claim “cholesterol-free” indicates that the product has less than two milligrams of cholesterol in the amount specified and is also low in saturated and trans fats.

SODIUM

Health Canada suggests keeping your daily sodium intake to less

“
*Currently there
is no daily
recommended
value for sugars,
but Health
Canada is
proposing one.*

than 1,500 milligrams, or just over half a teaspoon, and not consuming more than 2,300 milligrams. For a food product to be considered “sodium-free,” it must contain less than five milligrams of sodium per serving. Stick to foods that have a maximum of 360 milligrams of sodium per serving.

CARBOHYDRATES

This number represents the sum of sugar, starch and fibre in a serving size. While sugar and fibre must be listed under carbohydrates, food manufacturers aren’t obligated to mention starch. Sugar and starch provide energy to fuel both brain and muscles, while fibre is considered a non-digestible carbohydrate that is important to your health. Keep daily carbohydrate levels at around 300 grams.

FIBRE

To meet government regulations in Canada, a “source of fibre” nutrition claim means that a specific amount of food contains at least two grams of fibre. A “high source of fibre” has, at minimum, four grams, and a “very high source of fibre” contains six grams minimum. Aim for 25 grams of fibre a day.

SUGARS

The total grams of sugar listed on a label include both the refined

variety, meaning sugar added in processing, and naturally occurring ones, such as fructose found in fruit or lactose in milk. When possible, choose food products with naturally occurring sugars over those with refined ones. Currently there is no daily recommended value for sugars, but Health Canada is proposing to establish one at 100 grams.

PROTEIN

A source of the amino acids that help build and maintain a healthy body, protein also keeps you feeling full. On average, adults require 0.8 grams of protein for every kilogram of body weight, meaning a 68-kilogram adult needs about 55 grams of protein a day. 



Why free play
is important

Fun in Games

BY KRISTI GREEN

🌀 **THINK THAT SIX-YEAR-OLD** jumping in puddles is wasting time that would be better spent practising piano? Not really, it turns out. Since the late 1970s, research has illustrated a relationship between play and a multitude of useful skills. Studies show that less-structured activities (playing with sand, dress-up or doodling, say) are linked to improved cognitive functions, such as literacy and problem-solving skills, in kids.

Although scheduled activities like piano lessons can provide valuable learning opportunities, caregivers shouldn't underestimate the power of free play. In 2014, *Frontiers in Psychology* reported that children who spent more time playing freely became better at setting

and reaching goals than those who mainly engaged in structured activities, such as sports.

"Kids need unstructured time for cognitive, social and creative development," says Dr. William Ammons, a clinical psychologist in Bowmanville, Ont., who works with young people. He explains that,



when children are given a task to perform, they focus on a goal. Those who are given free rein must develop skills to test limits, make decisions and practise social skills. “Kids need time for quiet reflection and purposelessness, which isn’t about putting a ball in a net,” says Ammons.

Building life skills

Children are playful by nature, so they don’t need a lot to get their imaginations going. Something as simple as a piece of fabric can lead to the invention of role-playing games that support psychological development. By learning to listen, take turns and share ideas, kids in free play are doing more than just pretending to be wizards or astronauts. Rather, they are experimenting with putting themselves in others’ shoes, thereby developing empathy and personal awareness that will serve them into their grown-up years. The experience can enrich their understanding of both the world and who they are.

Even parents who find their kids neglecting school work to mess around with games and toys should feel reassured. According to Ken Gardner, a psychologist and co-director of the Rocky Mountain Play Therapy Institute in Calgary, research increasingly shows that richer play opportunities go hand in hand with literary development. “By Grade 3,

the ability to play is a better predictor of future academic success than current academic success is,” he says.

Tapping into emotions

Play can have mental-health benefits, too. At Rocky Mountain, therapists use play to help children work out problems and heal from trauma. Kids who might have trouble communicating their experiences with words can employ toys, art supplies, music and movement to express themselves instead. While most of what kids do is based in language, play helps them communicate in other ways.

“Through play, children can better understand and regulate their emotions,” Gardner says. “It is used in a self-healing way. Those who act out experiences gain a sense of control of their lives.”

Following their lead

There’s value in ensuring kids have their own time to explore, but when caregivers are involved, the experience is even more powerful. Playing together makes children feel special and promotes bonding and communication.

Grown-ups should resist the urge to turn playtime into a school lesson, Gardner warns. “Instead, follow the child so you can be attuned and sensitive to [their needs] and strengthen your relationship.” 

How to plan a holiday celebration that exceeds expectations

Life of the Party

BY ANDRE MAYER

☛ ONE OF THE BEST PARTS of the festive season is spending time with friends and family. A holiday party provides ample opportunity to celebrate with your nearest and dearest, but to some, the thought of feeding and entertaining a crowd can seem overwhelming.

Fear not: according to Louise Fox, a Toronto-based etiquette coach and former party planner, organizing a successful gathering comes down to this alliterative mantra: "Prior planning prevents poor performance."



Eat, drink, be merry

As host, your challenge is ensuring your guests' happiness without compromising your own. If you enjoy orchestrating a multi-course sit-down meal, knock yourself out. But if you'd prefer to avoid stress, have everyone serve themselves buffet-style, says Nancy Zaretsky, owner of the Toronto-based event-styling company My Perfect Party.

"It's about making it super easy for you and less fussy, so you can sit back and enjoy the party more," she says.

If there are vegetarians or people with food sensitivities in the mix, try to ensure you have three or four options for each person. Accommodating diverse dietary needs may seem like a tall order, but it's not impossible. Zaretsky says Japanese cuisine (with its emphasis on fish, rice and vegetables) and Mediterranean (with its array of delicious dips) can easily accommodate people with nut allergies and lactose or gluten intolerances.

While a well-stocked bar is a plus, many gatherings will also include designated drivers, underage revelers and abstainers. Hot chocolate is a crowd-pleaser, and Zaretsky suggests mixing soda water with fruit juices and fancy syrups, and adding a garnish to make "mocktails."

Manage the atmosphere

While refreshments are important, you also want to ensure guests are at ease. Fox says that partygoers immediately feel more comfortable when they have something to do with their hands. One way to defuse any initial awkwardness is to start off by passing around glasses of punch or a holiday-themed cocktail.

If there are small children buzzing about, consider setting up games or a movie to occupy them, says parenting author Ann Douglas. She also recommends identifying one or more "supportive allies"—

such as a cool teen or fun-loving aunt—who will happily entertain the younger set.



Capture the moment

Photos can be wonderful souvenirs, but the last thing you want to do is disrupt a smashing shindig by trying to stage a magazine-style shoot. "The photos that mean the most to us tend to be the fun, candid ones," says Douglas. "And who cares if they're a little off-kilter? It's capturing the spirit of the event."

Whether the tool of choice is an instant camera, a classic SLR or the latest-generation iPhone, there's always at least one partygoer who likes to play paparazzo. Douglas advises naming that person the unofficial photographer and asking them to share the best snaps via email or social media to ensure that your holiday bash lives on in posterity. **R**

'Tis the season for celebrating—and spending. These free downloads can help you stay on budget.

App-y Holidays

BY LISA COXON



For sending good tidings: Red Stamp Cards

PLATFORMS: IOS AND ANDROID

This app lets you choose a holiday-card template and electronically deliver it to loved ones. Add a photo, change the colour scheme and compose customized greetings that can be shared via email, text message and Facebook.



For finding the best sales: Flipp

PLATFORMS: IOS AND ANDROID

Flipp uncovers great deals on gifts and food by bringing local weekly flyers to your screen from hundreds of stores, including Walmart, Loblaw's, IKEA and Toys "R" Us. Save ads for on-sale items, and the app will notify you when those deals are about to end.



For tracking your spending: Santa's Bag

PLATFORMS: IOS

Handy for cash-strapped gift givers, Santa's Bag allows you to set a spending limit, store shopping lists and monitor whether you're exceeding your budget. You can enter information such as what stores you'll need to visit and how much an item costs.



For filling up the tank: GasBuddy

PLATFORMS: IOS, ANDROID, WINDOWS PHONE

AND BLACKBERRY

For most of us, holiday car travel is inevitable. With the option to sort by price or distance, this app displays gas rates geographically, allowing you to fill up—for less—before hitting the road.

R

Boomers Need To Consider Savings Protection



Protecting savings is always important but it's even more critical in retirement, since most Canadians will need to start drawing down the money they've put away. One way to ensure your money is safe is to deposit it in a financial institution that is a member of the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation (CDIC).

RRIF protection

Everyone who saves money in an RRSP will have to start withdrawing cash from a RRIF the year they turn 72. Imagine what would happen if your bank failed that year and you couldn't use your savings.

CDIC, a Crown corporation established in 1967, ensures that depositors' eligible funds are protected if one of its member financial institutions fails.

"Up to \$100,000 of cash and term deposits, such as Guaranteed Investment Certificates with an original term to maturity of five years or less, held in a registered retirement income fund will be protected", says Brad Evenson, CDIC's director of communications and public affairs.

The same is true for Tax Free Savings Accounts, as well as several other CDIC insurance categories.

Since 1967, no retiree — and no Canadian of any age — has lost a dime of their insured deposits due to the failure of a CDIC member institution.

"If Canadians are worried about losing their savings, they can keep the money in CDIC-insured products," he says.

Trust coverage

The closer they get to retirement age, the more people will be thinking about the legacy they want to leave to future generations.

Some boomers may want to set up a trust to keep some control over how their estates are distributed to their children and grandchildren after they pass away.

Fortunately, money in a trust is protected by the CDIC, says Evenson. As with a RRIF, the corporation will cover up to \$100,000 of cash and term deposits.

What's different with a trust, though, is that each beneficiary is protected to the full amount. If you have \$500,000 in one trust account, with \$100,000 allocated to five different people, all of that money will be covered in the event of a bank failure.

"Trust accounts are often very large and have a lot of beneficiaries," says Evenson. "Each person will be protected."

**Learn more
about protecting
your savings
at cdic.ca**



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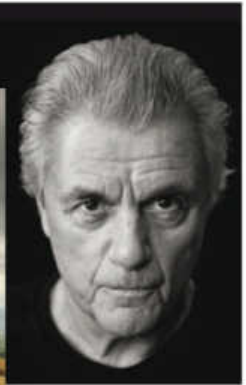
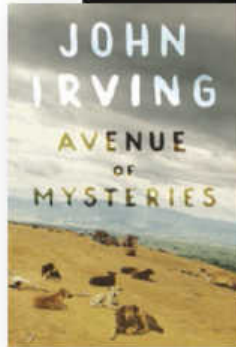
Penguin
Random House
Canada

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Avenue of Mysteries

John Irving's *Avenue of Mysteries* weaves a rich international tapestry that dwells equally in memory and uncontrollable imagination

REVIEW BY MARK HAMILTON



480 pages, \$35 (hardcover)
Release date November 3, 2015

Novelist John Irving has no time for false idols, and the exposed truths beneath the surfaces of *Avenue of Mysteries* reveal a world that's never quite what it seems. Telling the life story of celebrated Mexican-American author Juan Diego Guerrero via a fragmented, often drug-addled narrative that jumps both decades and continents, *Mysteries* explores worlds both tangible and supernatural. From the garbage dumps of Oaxaca, Mexico, the slow-moving suburbs of Iowa and the backwater resorts of the Philippines, Irving has

created an immensely moving and suspenseful autumnal page-turner.

Born in *el basurero*—the garbage dumps pored over by poor families in search of sellable treasures—Juan Diego earns the nickname “dump reader” after his life is immeasurably changed by charred books he saves from the dump’s fires. They open his eyes to a world beyond the smoky ruins around him. His psychic younger sister, Lupe, spits out the secrets of those around her, albeit spoken in an accent only Juan Diego can understand. Following their entry

into the circus as a brother-sister mind-reader act, Lupe's distrust of the sculptures of female saints propped around Oaxaca prompts a slew of comically profane insults he refuses to translate.

Where *Avenue of Mysteries* shines best is in its characterizations of Juan Diego and those around him, some potentially mere figments of his own imagi-

Mysteries is a journey well worth taking, the rare breed of book that causes readers to mourn the lack of more pages.

nation. As the tale progresses, we encounter those behind the curtains of the circus, a quartet of misfit priests, a golden-hearted trans-prostitute, vengeful lionesses, the shy ghosts of U.S. soldiers, and a mother-daughter pair of over-sexed Svengalis. Full of page-turner twists and surprises, *Mysteries* is doubtless one of the year's most original—and uniquely fulfilling—mainstream novels.

By the time we reach the novel's enlightening finale on the gecko-infested resort beaches of the Philippines, Irving's myriad avenues deconstruct the very art of writing itself. *Mysteries* is a journey well worth taking, the rare breed of book that causes readers to mourn the lack of more pages.

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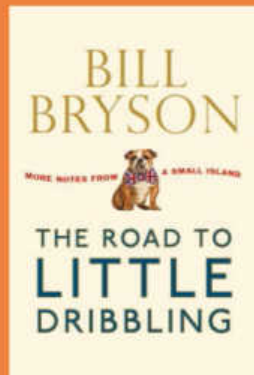
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A brand new collection of stories from Stuart McLean featuring a worldlier and wiser Dave and Morley.



Join Bill Bryson as he takes another uproarious trip around Britain to see what's changed in 20 years.



Penguin
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In her final novel, Ruth Rendell explores the shadowy reaches of the psyche

Heart of Darkness

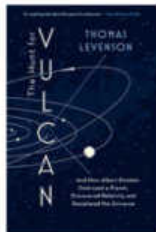
BY SARAH LISS

 Before her death earlier this year at the age of 85, British baroness Ruth Rendell was the ruling grande dame of crime fiction, having earned a wide following for her police procedurals and psychological thrillers. *Dark Corners*, her posthumous novel, examines the twisted relationship that develops between a man mired in guilt and the tenant who blackmails him. Like the rest of the Rendell canon, it's captivating and sinister. *Oct. 27.*



This month's hottest books, music and movies

 THE HUNT FOR VULCAN
Thomas Levenson



Levenson brings his knack for sharp narrative to this account of our solar system's "missing" planet—and the scientists who helped solve the puzzle. *Nov. 3.*

 **JOHN LE CARRÉ:
THE BIOGRAPHY**

Adam Sisman

The pre-eminent spy novelist and author known as John le Carré is as elusive as his secret-agent characters. Sisman, an acclaimed biographer (*An Honourable Englishman*), shines a light on the man behind the *nom de plume*. *Nov. 3.*

(RENDALL) © P. KEIGHTLEY/LEBRECHT



AFTER ALICE

Gregory Maguire

In 1995, Maguire reimaged Oz with his hit book *Wicked*. He pays a similar visit to Wonderland here, tracking Alice's pal Ada as she follows her friend down the rabbit hole. *Oct. 27.*



ONCE AGAIN IT'S CHRISTMAS

Kenny Rogers

As the title suggests, this isn't Rogers's debut holiday album—that'd be *Christmas*, released in 1981—but it is his first festive offering in 17 years. *Sept. 25.*



IT'S A HOLIDAY SOUL PARTY

Sharon Jones & The Dap-Kings

The indomitable singer infuses this collection of wide-ranging seasonal tunes with her signature brand of '60s-style funk. *Oct. 30.*



I SAW THE LIGHT

Though he died at the early age of 29, country music legend Hank Williams left behind an outsized legacy. Actor Tom Hiddleston delivers an A+ performance as the hard-living icon in this biopic. *Nov. 27.*



STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS

J.J. Abrams (*Star Trek*, *Lost*) helms this wildly anticipated instalment, which catches up with Luke, Leia and company 30 years after *Return of the Jedi*. *Dec. 18.*



THE LADY IN THE VAN

Dame Maggie Smith abandons her aristocratic trappings to play a troubled vagrant who takes up residence in her vehicle in this film based on a play based on a true story. *Dec. 11.*



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READER'S DIGEST

Taste of Home

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SWEET & SAVOURY

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Lemon-
Rosemary
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Trees

Savoury
Peas & Carrots

CHRISTMAS
WREATH BREAD

DISCOVER THESE FRESH AND FESTIVE RECIPES THAT CELEBRATE THE SEASON

Christmas Wreath Bread



The wreath design for this bread gives it such a festive look. I always make extras to give to friends and to sell at holiday bazaars. Everyone looks

forward to receiving them.

—**AGNES WARD**, STRATFORD, ONT.

PREP: 30 MIN. + RISING

BAKE: 20 MIN. + COOLING

MAKES: 1 WREATH (16 SLICES)

- 2 packages ($\frac{1}{4}$ oz or 7 g each) active dry yeast**
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups (375 mL) warm water (110–115°F or 43–46°C)**
- 6 tbsp (90 mL) butter**
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup (75 mL) nonfat dry milk powder**
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (50 mL) sugar**
- 1 egg**
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp (4 mL) salt**
- $4\frac{1}{2}$ to $5\frac{1}{2}$ cups (1.125 to 1.375 L) all-purpose flour**
- 2 tbsp (25 mL) butter, melted**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125 mL) chopped almonds**
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp (7 mL) ground cinnamon**
- 1 cup (250 mL) confectioners' sugar**
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) water**
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp (1 mL) almond extract**

1. In large bowl, dissolve yeast in warm water. Add butter, milk powder, sugar, egg, salt, and 3 cups flour. Beat on medium speed for 3 minutes. Stir in enough remaining flour to form a soft dough (dough will be sticky).

2. Turn onto a floured surface; knead until smooth and elastic, about 6–8 minutes.

Place in a greased bowl, turning once to grease the top. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 1 hour.

3. Punch dough down. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into an 18 x 12-in. (46 x 30 cm) rectangle. Brush with melted butter. Sprinkle with chopped almonds and cinnamon to within $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (1.25 cm) of edges. Roll up jelly-roll style, starting with a long side; pinch seam to seal.

4. Place seam side down on greased baking sheet; pinch ends together to form ring. With scissors, cut from outside edge to two-thirds of the way toward centre of ring at 1-in. (2.5 cm) intervals. Separate strips slightly; twist to allow filling to show. Cover and let rise until doubled, about 45 minutes.

5. Bake at 375°F (190°C) for 20–25 minutes or until golden brown. Combine confectioners' sugar, water, and extract; drizzle over warm bread.

NUTRITION FACTS: *1 slice equals 259 calories, 8 g fat (4 g saturated fat), 29 mg cholesterol, 170 mg sodium, 40 g carbohydrate, 2 g fibre, 6 g protein.*



Savoury Peas & Carrots

At less than 60 cents per serving, ready in 20 minutes, and prepared in one saucepan, this dish makes an ideal side. Even my husband, who doesn't like peas, eats this dish with enthusiasm.

—**MARIAN BROWN**, MISSISSAUGA, ONT.

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 20 MIN.

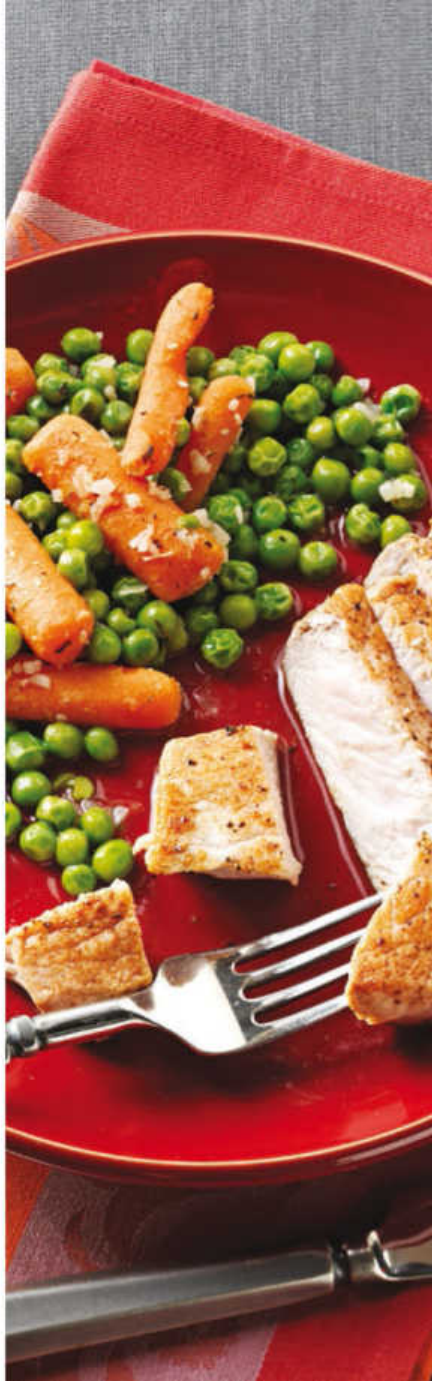
MAKES: 4 SERVINGS

1¹/₄ cups (300 mL) fresh baby carrots, cut in half lengthwise
2 cups (500 mL) frozen peas
2 tbsp (25 mL) butter
2 tsp (10 mL) dried minced onion
1¹/₄ tsp (1 mL) dried marjoram
1¹/₄ tsp (1 mL) dried thyme
1¹/₈ tsp (0.5 mL) sugar
1¹/₈ tsp (0.5 mL) pepper
Dash celery seed

1. Place carrots in small saucepan with enough water to cover. Bring to boil. Cover and cook for 4-5 minutes or until crisp-tender, adding the peas during last 3 minutes of cooking; drain.

2. Stir in remaining ingredients until butter is melted.

NUTRITION FACTS: *3/4 cup equals 124 calories, 6 g fat (4 g saturated fat), 15 mg cholesterol, 156 mg sodium, 14 g carbohydrate, 4 g fibre, 4 g protein.*



Roasted Turkey with Maple Cranberry Glaze

I prepare turkey with a taste of Canada in mind. The sweet maple flavour comes through even in the breast meat. You may start to notice its caramelized colour after about 2 hours. That's when I cover it loosely with foil while it finishes cooking. The meat will stay tender and juicy.

—**SUZANNE ANCTIL**,
WEST VANCOUVER, B.C.

PREP: 10 MIN. **BAKE:** 3 HOURS + STANDING
MAKES: 12 SERVINGS

- 1 turkey (12 to 14 lb or 5.4 to 6.4 kg)**
- 1 cup (250 mL) maple syrup**
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (175 mL) whole-berry cranberry sauce**
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (50 mL) finely chopped walnuts**

1. Place turkey on rack in shallow roasting pan, breast side up. Tuck wings under turkey; tie drumsticks together. In small bowl, combine maple syrup, cranberry sauce, and walnuts. Pour over turkey.

2. Bake, uncovered, at 325°F (160°C) for 3 to 3-3/4 hours or until a thermometer inserted in thigh reads 180°F (82°C), basting occasionally with pan drippings. Cover loosely with foil if turkey browns too quickly. Cover and let stand for 20 minutes before carving.

NUTRITION FACTS: 9 ounces cooked turkey equals 640 calories, 26 g fat (7 g saturated fat), 246 mg cholesterol, 185 mg sodium, 25 g carbohydrate, trace fibre, 73 g protein.





Lemon-Rosemary Cutout Trees



—SARAH REYNOLDS, VICTORIA, B.C.

I recommend serving these cookies with tea. They're not too sweet and the lemon and rosemary pair well with a cup of Earl Grey.

PREP: 40 MIN.

BAKE: 10 MIN./BATCH + COOLING

MAKES: 2½ DOZEN

- ½ cup (125 mL) butter, softened
- ½ cup (125 mL) sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp (5 mL) vanilla extract
- 1¾ (425 mL) cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tbsp (25 mL) minced fresh rosemary
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) grated lemon peel
- ½ tsp (2 mL) salt
- Coarse sugar (optional)
- 1 to 2 tbsp (15 to 25 mL) vanilla frosting

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). In large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg and vanilla. In another bowl, whisk flour, rosemary, lemon peel, and salt; gradually beat into creamed mixture.

2. On lightly floured surface, roll dough to 1/8-in. (31 mm) thickness. Cut out 30 trees, using floured 3-in. (7.6 cm) tree-shaped cookie cutter; cut out 30 stars, using a floured 1/2-in. (1.27 cm) star-shaped cookie cutter.

3. Place trees 1 in. (2.5 cm) apart on ungreased baking sheets. If desired, sprinkle with coarse sugar. Bake 10-12 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from pans to wire racks to cool completely.

4. Place stars 1 in. (2.5 cm) apart on ungreased baking sheet. If desired, sprinkle with coarse sugar. Bake 6-8 minutes or until golden brown. Cool completely on pan.

5. Attach stars to trees with frosting.

NUTRITION FACTS: 1 cookie equals 72 calories, 3 g fat (2 g saturated fat), 14 mg cholesterol, 67 mg sodium, 9 g carbohydrate, trace fibre, 1 g protein.

Send your
recipes!

**CALLING ALL
HOME COOKS!**

Share your favourite recipes
at tasteofhome.com/submit.

Since childhood, Craig Kielburger has devoted himself to changing the world. Now he wants to make it easy for the rest of us to follow his lead.

ONE LIFE TO GIVE

BY NICHOLAS HUNE-BROWN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY WALDY MARTENS



THERE IS NO TYPICAL day in the life of Craig Kielburger. This past May, he was in Chicago sharing the stage with basketball legend Magic Johnson and singer Jennifer Hudson, telling an arena full of wide-eyed youth that they can change the world. Not long after that, he was in India—no, make that Kenya, meeting “the mamas” who assemble the glass bead bracelets that Kielburger sells through his social enterprise Me to We. In a few hours, he’ll be on a plane to Calgary, where he’ll visit school groups. For now, though, the 32-year-old is in a Toronto studio on a late summer afternoon, asking the hair and makeup artist about her day, charming the photographer, looping a beaded bracelet around his wrist in preparation for the shoot, ready to tell his story.

“It started in April ’95,” Kielburger says. He leans in, smiles.

It is impossible to know how many times Kielburger has shared this anecdote. Once a day, every day, for 20 years? Each time he talks to a stranger on a flight or delivers a keynote address? The story is what put Kielburger on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*—at age 16 and five times since then—convincing her to chip in the cash and infrastructure that gave his small charity a boost in its first years. It is at the heart of Kielburger’s rapidly growing organization, the thing that sets him apart from other groups in a crowded charitable field that is as competitive as the corporate world.

It goes, roughly, like this: In 1995, at age 12, Kielburger was eating breakfast in his kitchen in Thornhill, Ont., when he reached for the comics and instead

found a *Toronto Star* article about the murder of another 12-year-old, a Pakistani child-labour activist named Iqbal Masih. Inspired, Kielburger and a group of schoolmates started Free the Children. A few months later, the middle-school student convinced his parents to let him travel to southern and southeastern Asia.

That journey, documented in Kielburger’s 1998 book, *Free the Children*, reads like the origin story of a social-justice superhero. Kielburger met with child labourers, visited Mother Teresa and cajoled then-prime minister Jean Chrétien into a meeting. He emerged, nearly two months later, as a fully formed celebrity activist—a prodigy of the charity realm whose face graced newspapers, the cherubic embodiment of a certain kind of Canadian liberal conscience.

Now, two decades later, Kielburger remains the face of Free the Children and his story remains the organization's founding narrative. The charity that he began in his parents' home is still a family endeavour. Kielburger works alongside his older brother, Marc (a 38-year-old Harvard University grad and Rhodes Scholar), and Marc's wife, Roxanne Joyal.

Those constants, however, mask larger changes. The tiny faction that fought child labour has become infinitely more complex and far-reaching. Last year, Free the Children took in nearly \$50 million in donations. To date, it has built more than 1,000 schools and schoolrooms in places such as Kenya, Nicaragua and Ecuador. In 2008, the brothers launched Me to We, a social-purpose entity that operates in concert with Free the Children, donating half of its profits to the charity and keeping the rest for its ongoing expansion. Me to We works with more than 10,000 public schools in North America and the United Kingdom, offering education programs and promoting an app that lets users track their good deeds 365 days a year. Students who volunteer through the We Schools program earn tickets to an annual We Day, where up to 20,000 screaming teens watch the brothers share the stage with other activists and pop stars like Selena Gomez and Demi Lovato.

Kielburger has spent his entire adult life pursuing something he began as a child. His goal now, both incredibly ambitious and impossibly abstract, is to bring as many global citizens as possible into his movement. "At the end of the day, we're an empowerment organization," Kielburger says. He slows down his words, delivers the pitch with a sing-song rhythm. "We want to empower people. To find simple ways. To change the world."



**"WE SHOULDN'T SHY
AWAY FROM COMPANIES
DOING GOOD IN
THE WORLD," SAYS
KIELBURGER OF HIS
CORPORATE PARTNERS.**

IF YOU WANT TO turn your middle-school hobby into a global business, it helps to recognize your mistakes. Free the Children has evolved from a group with a narrow mandate to end child labour to a much broader development charity—a mini-Oxfam, building schools, installing water pumps and delivering health care to communities through its Adopt a Village program.

In recent years the Kielburgers have also begun to change some of the ways they think about their mission.

Today, Free the Children devotes more money to programs in North America than to development work overseas, spending 49 per cent of its income on domestic programs aimed at “awakening the spirit of volunteerism in young people.” With Me to We, the brothers have created a socially conscious business that sells knapsacks and accessories made by those “mamas” in Kenya, charges speaking fees for its stable of activists, and offers trips for which teenagers pay about \$5,000 to spend around 20 days in places like India and Tanzania, where they might volunteer with a local community and go on safari.

In conversation, Kielburger can sound like a cross between a self-help guru and a start-up CEO. He boasts about We Day being one of the world's largest registered non-profit initiatives on social media, talks about “scaling” and “technological builds.” The morning before our meeting, I had gone online to buy one of Me to We's beaded bracelets, curious about the process. Now, in the studio, Kielburger is keen to know about my experience.

“Did you track your ‘pact yet?” he asks eagerly. The Track Your Impact system is one of the innovations that excites him most. By entering my code, I'm able to see that my \$10 has gone toward clean water in Kenya's Narok South constituency, helping people like 15-year-old Benet, who's pictured, smiling, using the water

I helped provide. The initiative is, in many ways, an extension of old “sponsor a child” programs—an effort to personalize the act of giving. The warm glow of charity tends to dissipate the further you are from the recipient. Kielburger's tracking system is a technological solution to an emotional problem: how do I feel like my act of generosity is making a specific difference in someone's life?

In the world of international development and education, the Kielburgers are notable for their eagerness to adopt the lessons of the private sector. “Everyone in the non-profit community comes with a big heart,” says Marc. “But a big heart doesn't get you very far in terms of results.” Kielburger is the youngest ever Executive Master of Business Administration graduate of York University's Schulich School of Business in Toronto. Marc, a self-described “numbers guy,” encourages every member of the senior leadership staff to read the entire oeuvre of Jim Collins, the bestselling business author who documents the characteristics of leaders who blend “extreme personal humility... with intense professional will.”

While Free the Children began with tweens sending in their allowances and graduation money, today corporations provide the largest portion of the charity's funding. At times, this relationship can feel uncomfortable. In the ABC broadcast of its We Day



Craig Kielburger (left) and his brother, Marc, visiting a Kenyan family in 2007.

event in Chicago, a short segment that focuses on a young girl learning about water scarcity in Kenya abruptly shifts locales to an American pharmacy. “The other cool thing is, my mom and I, we always go to our local Walgreens. And when we got back from Kenya, we discovered these products that donate five gallons of water to communities like the ones we’d visited in Kenya,” the girl narrates as the camera pans across various Walgreens offerings.

For Kielburger, corporate partnerships are simply a reality in an era in which there are government cutbacks, and where economic constraints limit the generosity of individual Canadians. For a company like Unilever—the multinational giant

that controls everything from Dove to Lipton soup—teaming up with Me to We offers clear benefits: the chance to associate its products with We-branded benevolence in front of an audience of idealistic tweens. For Kielburger, the trade-off is worthwhile. “We shouldn’t shy away from companies doing good in the world,” he says. In the case of Unilever, the corporation agreed to donate 19 litres of water each time consumers bought specific products during a two-month period. As a result, Kielburger explains, Free the Children will be able to provide 66 million litres of clean water through a borehole being drilled in Kipsongol, Kenya, a project set to be completed in 2016.

IN THE TORONTO STUDIO, Kielburger smiles as the photographer adjusts his pose. His devotion to his work seems all-encompassing. I ask if he has any hobbies. "Hobbies," he muses. There is a long pause. "I listen to CBC radio every morning when I get up," he says finally. The impression he leaves is of an ambitious young man in constant motion—munching energy bars on dirt roads in Tanzania, doing bicep curls with packed suitcases in distant hotel rooms, coming home to update his retired-schoolteacher parents.



THE KIELBURGERS
ARE INVESTED—
FUNDAMENTALLY,
WHOLEHEARTEDLY—
IN THE POWER OF
THE SIMPLE IDEA.

While being groomed, Kielburger shamelessly tries to recruit the makeup artist. "How would you like to do the Dalai Lama's hair?" He pauses. "The Dalai Lama doesn't have hair. But how would you like to do Martin Sheen's hair? Martin Sheen has fantastic hair." The young woman laughs and agrees to help out at We Day in Toronto. They exchange cards—another foot soldier in the growing Kielburger movement.

At times, there is something disconcerting about the Kielburger brand. Few charities are so consciously built around a charismatic leader. Kielburger, by accident or design, has become that rare figure: a star whose most famous attribute is his essential goodness.

For critics of the Kielburgers, the self-help style of the Me to We movement can be troubling. "If you go to a We Day, you learn very little about the causes and conditions of suffering in the rest of the world," says David Jefferess, an associate professor at the University of British Columbia who has written about Free the Children and Me to We. "What you learn is that you will feel good by doing this and that's why you should do it, not because it's actually the most effective way to alleviate poverty."

In conversation, Kielburger cheerfully offers clichés that have been honed through hundreds of speeches and presentations. "Youth aren't problems to be solved: they're *problem solvers*," he says. "In Canada we export a lot of things to the world, but one of the things I think we have to be proud that we export is compassion." It can feel as though complex global problems have been reduced to feel-good aphorisms. But those sunny clichés are the very core of the Kielburger philosophy. In *Me to We: Turning Self-Help on Its Head*, the brothers' 2004 book, they lay out their belief system on the

opening pages: “In life, we are told that easy answers are hard to come by. Many believe that they simply don’t exist. We respectfully disagree.”

The Kielburgers are invested—wholeheartedly, fundamentally—in the power of the simple idea. They insist that multi-faceted solutions can begin with a basic determination to think less about yourself and more about the world. “Psychologists tell us there are two reasons why people don’t act,” Kielburger tells me. “No. 1 one is that they don’t feel connected to it. No. 2 is that they feel powerless: ‘I’m only one person, so how can I make a difference?’”

Kielburger is determined to wash away that paralyzing skepticism with a blast of enthusiasm. Rowan Goodfellow, a 17-year-old Torontonian who has volunteered with Free the Children, says it’s hard to describe the atmosphere at We Days. It can be very emotional, she says, “to look around the Air Canada Centre and see so many people who are young and want to make a difference.”

And this is where Kielburger remains such an important figure, why his narrative remains so vital. Craig Kielburger was just a regular kid—naive, young, but determined to make a change. He was just like you. And now look at him. Look at the people he’s helped. Just look at what one person can do when he decides he wants to change the world. **R**

EXPERT TIPS TO HELP YOU GIVE BETTER

1. BROADEN YOUR OPTIONS

People might assume that helping out involves regular service or financial donations—time and money that we can’t always spare. But Paula Speevak, the president and CEO of Volunteer Canada, describes a “spectrum of engagement.” You could educate yourself about food security or homelessness, for instance, or assist at an event.

2. LISTEN TO YOUR HEART

To get the most out of your contribution, find a cause that you care about. Jordan Birch, the co-founder of the Ugly Christmas Sweater Party fundraising initiative, says, “Giving back is about creating a connection. Find something that makes you want to get up in the morning.”

3. BUILD HELPING OTHERS INTO YOUR SCHEDULE

When Birch coaches people on how to increase their philanthropic footprint, he urges them to find a routine. “Make it part of your day or week. Make it a priority now.” And though many newbie volunteers choose the holiday season to get started, Speevak encourages people to think of year-round needs.

4. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

For active volunteers, burnout can be a major issue—especially, Speevak notes, in high-stress areas such as bereavement or victim support. “Make time to recharge,” she says. “You’re not letting anyone down. You’re doing what you need to make sure you can be effective.”

At 13, my autistic son was struggling to connect with others. Help, it turns out, was just a phone away.

This Is a Love Letter to a Machine

BY JUDITH NEWMAN FROM *THE NEW YORK TIMES*

JUST HOW BAD a mother am I? I wondered last year, as I watched my son, then 13, immersed in conversation with Siri. Gus has autism, and Siri, Apple's "intelligent personal assistant" on the iPhone, is one of his closest confidantes. Obsessed with weather formations, Gus had spent the past hour parsing the difference between isolated and scattered thunderstorms—an hour in which, thank God, I didn't have to discuss them. After a while, I heard this exchange:

Gus: "You are always asking if you can help me. Is there anything you want?"

Siri: "Thank you, but I have very few wants."

Gus: "Okay! Well, good night!"

Siri: "Ah, it's 5:06 p.m."

Gus: "Oh, sorry. I mean goodbye."

Siri: "See you later!"

This is a love letter to a machine. In a world where it's commonly believed that technology isolates us, it's worth considering another side of the story.

MARK MILLER



IT ALL BEGAN SIMPLY enough. I'd just read an Internet list called "21 Things You Didn't Know Your iPhone Could Do." One of them was this: I could ask Siri, "What planes are above me right now?" and Siri would produce a list of actual flights—numbers, altitudes, angles—above my head.

I happened to be reading this when Gus was nearby. "Why would anyone need to know what planes are flying above their heads?" I muttered. "So you know who you're waving at, Mommy," Gus replied.

Gus had never noticed Siri before, but when he discovered there was someone who would not just find information on his various obsessions (trains, planes, buses, escalators and weather) but semi-discuss these subjects tirelessly, he was hooked. And I was grateful. Now, when my head was about to explode if I had to have another conversation about the chance of tornadoes in Kansas City, Mo., I could reply brightly: "Hey! Why don't you ask Siri?"

It's not that Gus doesn't understand Siri's not human. He does—intellectually. But like many autistic people I know, Gus feels that inanimate objects, while maybe not possessing souls, are worthy of our consideration. I realized this when he was eight and I got him an iPod for his birthday. He listened to it only at home, with one exception. It always came with us on our visits to the

Apple Store. Finally, I asked why. "So it can visit its friends," he said.

So how much more worthy of his care and affection is Siri, with her soothing voice, puckish humour and capacity for talking endlessly about Gus's current fixation? Critics have claimed that Siri's voice recognition is not as accurate as the assistant in, say, the Android operating system, but for some of us, this is a feature, not a bug. Gus speaks as if he has marbles in his mouth—if he wants to get the right response from Siri, he must enunciate clearly.

She is also wonderful for someone who doesn't pick up on social cues. Siri's responses aren't entirely predictable, but they are predictably kind—even when Gus is brusque. Once, I heard him talking to Siri about music, and she offered some suggestions. "I don't like that kind of music," Gus snapped. Siri replied, "You're certainly entitled to your opinion." Siri's politeness reminded my son what he owed her. "Thank you for that music, though," Gus said. Siri replied, "You don't need to thank me." "Oh, yes," Gus added emphatically, "I do."

My son's practice discussions with Siri are making it easier for him to talk to actual humans. Last year marked one of the longest conversations I'd ever had with him. Admittedly, it was about different species of turtles and whether I preferred the red-eared slider to the diamondback terrapin.

This might not have been my topic of choice, but the discussion had been back and forth, and it had followed a logical trajectory. I can promise you that, for most of my beautiful son's 13 years of existence, that had not been the case.

The developers of intelligent assistants recognize their utility to those with speech and communication problems. Some are even thinking of new ways the software can help. According to the folks at SRI International, the California research and development company where Siri began before Apple bought the technology, the next generation of virtual assistants will not just retrieve information—they will also be designed to carry on more complex conversations about whatever the user enjoys learning about. “Your son will be able to proactively get information about what he’s interested in without asking for it, because the assistant will anticipate what he likes,” says William Mark, president of information and computing sciences at SRI.

Mark says he envisions assistants whose help is also visual. “For example, the assistant would be able to track eye movements and help users with autism learn to look you in the eye when talking,” he says.

“That’s the wonderful thing about technology being able to help with

a number of these behaviours,” says Mark. “Getting results requires a lot of repetition. Humans are not patient. Machines are very, very patient.”

OF ALL THE WORRIES the parent of an autistic child has, the uppermost is: will he find love? Or even companionship? Somewhere along the line, I am learning that what brings my guy happiness is not necessarily the same as what brings me happiness. Right now, at his age, a time when humans can be a little overwhelming for the average teenager, Siri makes Gus happy. I remember a time when, as he was going to bed, there was this matter-of-fact exchange:

Gus: “Siri, will you marry me?”

Siri: “I’m not the marrying kind.”

Gus: “I mean, not now. I’m a kid. I mean when I’m grown up.”

Siri: “My end-user agreement does not include marriage.”

Gus: “Oh, okay.”

Gus didn’t sound too disappointed.

This was useful information for me to have, since it was the first time I knew that he actually thought about marriage. He turned over to go to sleep.

Gus: “Good night, Siri. Will you sleep well tonight?”

Siri: “I don’t need much sleep, but it’s nice of you to ask.”

Very nice.



Life's Like That



"There. Nice and tidy."

PLEASE, ELABORATE

Back in 2014, I attended a hiking convention in Jasper, Alta., with a few friends. One day, three of us went out on a 10-kilometre walk. While we were out, we encountered a female elk, which cornered us on the trail for half an hour. After we managed to get away from the animal, we texted our friends back home in Eastern Passage, N.S., and told them what we had seen. Their reply: "And what elks happened?"

SANDY HICKEY, *Eastern Passage, N.S.*

COPING STRATEGIES

I feel like when life gives me lemons, I just give them back because I hate holding stuff.

🐦 @THEJAMIELEE

UPDATE

I intend to live forever. So far, so good.

Comedian **STEVEN WRIGHT**

Is your love of good humour immortal? Prove it and send us your original jokes! They could be featured in our upcoming issue. See page 13 or visit rd.ca/joke for more details.



HEART & STROKETM
FOUNDATION

NO PARENT WANTS
TO HEAR THEY
PASSED ALONG A
DEADLY GENE TO
THEIR CHILD.

That's what April Kawaguchi learned, that her son Andrew inherited her heart condition that causes sudden cardiac arrest and death.

Family history can double your risk of heart disease and stroke, yet many of these genes are unknowingly passed along.

Doctors predict the remaining 80% of this genetic mystery could be discovered in the next 5 years. That's why we fund the best medical minds in the world for genetic research.

Start by knowing your family history and personal risks by getting a FREE ASSESSMENT at heartandstroke.ca.

Thanks to our visionary partner CP for helping move research forward.



Dave Schelske's beloved dog, Sandy, stood, motionless, on the tiny ledge, just one slip away from the abyss below

SURVIVOR DOG

BY ANITA BARTHOLOMEW

PHOTOGRAPHY BY NASH CO.



*Schelske and
Sandy near
their home
in Oregon.*

THE HOUSE IN WEST LINN, just south of Portland, Ore., was quiet late on Christmas morning last year. For Dave Schelske, 46, the celebrations were over. He'd just dropped his eight-year-old twins, Tristan and Lawson, at their mother's place. Schelske, an outdoorsman and photographer, decided to focus his attention—and his camera—on Oregon's natural beauty, with Sandy, his three-year-old Labrador retriever-Rhodesian Ridgeback mix, by his side.

Having packed the retractable leash he'd bought Sandy for Christmas, his photography gear and other essentials, Schelske opened the truck door so his energetic pet could jump in the cab. They headed off to the Columbia River Gorge, less than an hour north.

Schelske liked to say that his family hadn't picked out Sandy at the shelter; she had chosen them. He and the boys had been sitting shoulder to shoulder in the reception area when the seven-month-old yellow pup had been led out. In an instant, she'd jumped up and lain across their laps. They'd known right away: this was their dog.

SCHELSKE PULLED INTO the car park for Eagle Creek Trail, a hike he remembered for its waterfall about three kilometres from the trailhead.

But it had been so long since his last visit that he had forgotten about the dramatic drop-off on the narrow trail. Carved into a mountain, the path hugged a rock wall on the left; on the right, there was nothing—just a sheer vertical face that extended down a cliff to Eagle Creek. And the

gorge became deeper the higher up they climbed.

Schelske made a mental note to choose a different trail next time he took Sandy on a hike. But the Lab mix was used to hard treks and rocky surfaces, and many other hikers had their dogs with them. Sandy's new leash extended about six metres from a retractable spool; now Schelske realized he'd have to keep her very close and not let the lead extend at all in order to give other hikers enough space to pass.

At around noon, the pair climbed past a particularly tight stretch, barely more than a metre wide in places. Metal cables had been tethered to the rock wall for hikers to grasp. The drop-off into the gorge was more than 60 metres down.

It had been raining all morning. To the photographer's eye, the fog settling onto the trees coupled with the cable handrail wrapping the rock face created a striking composition. Schelske tied Sandy's leash around a tree trunk, retrieved his camera from his backpack and began shooting.

Once satisfied, he started walking back toward Sandy, who sat patiently waiting. Suddenly, frightened by something, the dog bolted, all six metres of retractable leash spooling out behind her. The last of it came undone from the stump as Schelske took off after his dog. He shouted her name, expecting her to stop. And she did, for a moment. Then, *clank, clank, clank*, the plastic handle of the leash hit the rocks, spooking her even more.



FAR BELOW,
THE CREEK ROARED
AND TWISTED OVER
THE ROCKS. *WHERE
COULD SHE BE?*

“Sandy, wait!” he called, but she sped around the corner, out of sight.

When Schelske heard a loud yelp, he assumed Sandy’s collar had snagged on something, pulling at her. He’d soothe her as soon as he caught up. But, seconds later, when he turned the same corner, all he found was a broken leash lying against a tree at the cliff’s edge.

The path where he discovered the pieces hugged a steep incline suitable only for mountain goats and very well equipped climbers. After about six metres, it ended in a narrow slot canyon—and the edge dropped

almost straight down. There were no skid or claw marks to indicate she’d slid on the incline. Far below, the creek roared and twisted over the rocks. *Where could she be?*

Panicked, Schelske started back down the trail, asking a woman who was climbing up, “Did you see a yellow Labrador run by?” The woman said no. So did everyone else he passed. The other hikers suggested calling 9-1-1, but there was no signal this high up.

As the minutes stretched to an hour, his dread grew stronger. If Sandy had fallen near where he’d found her leash, she could not have survived.

He returned to the spot where the dog had disappeared. None of this would have happened if he’d had her on her sturdier, shorter lead. *What will I tell the boys?* His sons loved Sandy as much as he did.

Schelske frantically called his dog’s name. He knew there would be no response, but he couldn’t stop himself.

Two middle-aged women coming up the trail heard his cries and asked what had happened. He explained, then started climbing the main path to search for a way to the bottom. Schelske bushwhacked his way down the makeshift side trail that led to the base of the cliff. It would be difficult and unsafe, but he was an experienced climber. And it was his only chance of recovering Sandy.

Unbeknownst to Schelske, the two women headed down the main

trail, found an access point to get to the river and started searching on their own. Schelske soon found the women and tried to discourage them, afraid they would be injured. "If you want to help, maybe go to where the leash was," he said. Then he'd have a point of reference as he searched.

One agreed and turned back, but her friend refused to budge. She was staying with Schelske.



HE WANTED TO
BELIEVE THAT SANDY
WOULD BE WAITING
AT THE TRUCK, BUT
HOPE WAS FADING.

ON THIS CHRISTMAS afternoon, firefighter-paramedic Rene Pizzo was in a movie theatre with her husband when her phone buzzed. The text message from the Oregon Humane Society Technical Animal Rescue Team (OHSTAR) said a dog had gone off a cliff and to check email for further details. Pizzo was the longest serving member of the volunteer OHSTAR crew, all trained to perform canine rescues under difficult conditions.

Rushing home, she changed into warm clothes, picked up her go-pack—helmet, harness, gloves, safety glasses, headlamp—and set out for

the trailhead. Meanwhile, a few of her colleagues met up at the organization's headquarters in Portland to gather more rescue equipment.

According to the email, the dog had plunged off the Eagle Creek Trail. This would be the third over that cliff in 2014 alone. Canine eyesight is no match for a human's. Plus, a dog's depth perception is poor. Hiking such a trail was much more hazardous for the pets than for their owners.

JUST BEFORE 5 P.M., John Thoeni and his girlfriend, veterinarian Emily Amsler, were sitting down to Christmas dinner. The candles were lit, the wine poured but not yet sampled. Then their phones rang simultaneously. The meal would have to wait. OHSTAR needed them at Eagle Creek.

In all, eight volunteers were calling off their festivities to save a dog that might already be beyond hope.

AT EAGLE CREEK, having descended for an hour through dense vegetation to the river, Schelske and his companion searched for any sign of Sandy. Day was turning to dusk, and the air growing colder. Without flashlights, they'd be stuck in the gorge for the night if they didn't go back now. Disheartened, they turned around, Schelske leading the way. He wanted to believe that somehow his dog would be waiting for him at the truck, but hope was fading.



The narrow trail close to where Sandy went over the edge.

Then he heard the woman behind him say something odd. "Hey, girl!"

What?

He followed her gaze upward but saw nothing, just bushes, boulders and the cliff.

He was almost afraid to ask: "Is she alive?"

The woman nodded. "She's looking right at me."

Schelske clambered onto some logs, and there she was, maybe 20 metres above him, wagging her tail. She was standing. That was a good sign. Relief and joy coursed through him.

"Come here, girl. C'mon, Sandy."

She whimpered but didn't move. *Why wasn't she coming to him?*

As he climbed closer, he saw her predicament. Perched on a tiny ledge near the bottom of a slot canyon, she was jammed against the rock wall at her back. Open space surrounded her, but Sandy was too far from a safe landing place to risk jumping.

Schelske couldn't find a way to bridge the five or six metres that still separated him from his dog. He'd need some gear from his truck. Scrambling down again, he and his search partner made a plan. If they wrapped a rope around a nearby tree trunk and she paid it out as he climbed, he'd be able to grab Sandy and bring her back.

Meanwhile, a family Schelske had met earlier had called 9-1-1. A rescue team was on its way.

As soon as he returned to the gorge, loaded with gear, Schelske realized his plan wouldn't work. His helper was spent. Shivering, she told him the cold had caused her joints to painfully stiffen and she could barely move her fingers. She'd have to head back.

By now, it had to be about 5 p.m. The grey sky would soon be black. Schelske felt defeated. Then the woman acting as lookout by the leash hollered down the canyon. The first animal rescue volunteer had arrived.

All he could do was wait and try to soothe his terrified dog. "It's going to be okay, girl. I'm right here."

AT ABOUT 7 P.M., the final members of the OHSTAR team reached Eagle Creek and began ascending the trail. Clouds obscured any moonlight that might have illuminated their path. Luckily, the woman who had been helping Schelske and had first spotted Sandy met them on the trail and pointed them to Schelske's location, 60 metres below, in the canyon.



THE RESCUER TRIED
TO KEEP THE DOG
CALM. "GOOD GIRL,
SANDY. I'LL SEE YOU
IN JUST A MINUTE...."

SANDY WAS TRAPPED about 50 metres down the cliff, the equivalent of a 15-storey building. The tiny ledge on which she perched wasn't flat but crowned—she couldn't sit or turn without risking a plunge to the gorge's floor. The dog had been standing like a statue for several hours. By now she was, in effect, frozen in place.

As the volunteers unloaded anchors, harnesses, lights and other gear, Schelske shone his flashlight on the ledge so John Thoeni—who was going to rappel down the cliff to Sandy—would know where to land.

Extreme caution was in order: if he descended directly above the dog,

falling debris could hurt her or scare her into jumping off the ledge and into the abyss. Once Thoeni reached Sandy's side, a dual rope-and-pulley system would be used to hoist man and dog back up again. Rene Pizzo was team leader; Emily Amsler doubled as vet and photographer.

Bruce Wyse, a mountaineer, was in charge of finding trees that met their parameters for anchoring the ropes and pulleys, but few were adequate. Either the roots were too shallow or the trunks weren't the right distance from the ledge. Two more hours passed before everything was in place and the rescue could begin.

SCHELSKE COULD SEE none of this from his vantage point down by the creek. He focused on reassuring Sandy that he was still there and kept his flashlight trained on her. By now he had burned through several batteries. The chill cut through his clothing, but at least he could hop around to stay warm. Sandy couldn't move.

AT 9:36 P.M., Thoeni started rappelling down, in protective gear and carrying a loaded pack. It had been more than eight hours since Sandy fell.

He reminded himself that from the dog's point of view, he might as well be descending from a UFO. She was trapped and frightened. Keeping his voice calm and even, Thoeni spoke to her in baby talk as the team lowered

him down. “Good girl, Sandy. I’ll see you in just a minute...”

The team had hoped to deposit him just to the left of her, but the cliff wall curved in suddenly and left him dangling about a metre away from the rock face, unable to grab hold.

He would have to drop another three metres before he could climb to Sandy.

Digging his hands and feet into any crevice that gave him purchase, Thoeni clambered up the rock face made slippery by the rain until he was level with the dog. With one arm on the ledge to steady himself, he reached into his backpack for a treat. As still now as the cliff itself, Sandy seemed to barely notice the offering.

Manoeuvring carefully, Thoeni attached a leash to her collar. Next came a muzzle, just in case. Finally, he wrapped her in a rescue harness that was, like the one he wore, connected to the rope-and-pulley system. They were good to go.

He radioed the team above to begin pulling. Cradling the dog against his chest to protect her from branches and rocks as they ascended,

Thoeni and Sandy rose, 15, 30, 50 metres in the air. They reached the top at 10:23 p.m.

THOENI’S JOB WAS finished. It was time for Amsler to assess Sandy.

Amazingly, the dog had few visible injuries: a torn foreclaw, badly scraped paw pads. But she was barely moving, wasn’t whimpering. Sandy was in shock.

The team began to pack up, congratulating each other on a successful rescue. They had been given the best possible Christmas gift—it could have ended very differently.

The volunteers were ready to head back down the trail when Sandy brightened. They soon saw why: Schelske had appeared at the edge of the trail, having trekked up in the darkness, with just the small beam of his flashlight to guide him. Sandy rushed to her owner, who wrapped his arms around her in relief. He was so grateful no one had been hurt.

Schelske beamed at his dog, then at the people who had abandoned their holiday plans to save her. “I wish I could hug you all,” he said. **R**



A QUESTION OF COMMITMENT

If you don’t stick to your values when they’re being tested,
they’re not values; they’re hobbies.

JON STEWART

Introducing the winners of the inaugural Canadian Innovators in Education Awards



Leadersⁱⁿ Learning

BY STÉPHANIE VERGE

WHAT DOES IT TAKE to inspire students and galvanize teachers? Who are the educators working to improve learning on a large scale? And how do they achieve lasting change in the classroom? Those are the questions we at *Reader's Digest* asked ourselves when we created the new Canadian Innovators in Education Awards in partnership with the Canadian Education Association. A celebration of the teachers, principals and administrators who have developed pioneering programs with long-term impact throughout their school districts, these prizes are an investment in the future of our children—and our country.



**Rhonda
Ovelson
and Jamie
Robinson**

**First Place \$25,000
Central Okanagan
School District
Kelowna, B.C.**

*Because student success means
teaching the teachers*

For Rhonda Ovelson and Jamie Robinson, “shoulder to shoulder” is a motto and a practical vision. Working side by side has become the principle on which 43 institutions in British Columbia’s Central Okanagan



Teachers at Quigley Elementary in Kelowna collaborate on an assignment.

School District have pinned their hopes. The group's goal is to ensure every student learns in a purposeful and powerful way.

Four years ago, the district came up with a bold plan. Dismayed by reports of low satisfaction rates among educators after professional-development sessions, as well as poor student responses to some of the new classroom approaches, the group assembled an Instructional Leadership Team (ILT). Comprising one district principal and six lead teachers, the new team vowed to help the educators be their best selves.

Before reassessing the message, the ILT tackled the messenger. The

team would provide collaborative planning, teaching and learning in schools to allow instructors to build their skills and ramp up students' engagement. Being on-site would be essential: proximity to the classroom would allow for development to be continuous and context-sensitive—and therefore more effective. When the ILT departed, school staff would have new tools to help them carry on planning and teaching together.

"I started my career in the early 1990s," says Ovelson, the founding principal of the ILT and currently a director of instruction for the district. "And as a new teacher I was pretty much given the keys to that classroom. I did the very best I could. But if I'd had access to infrastructure that would have allowed me to continue to learn and be responsive in class with the backing of the school team around me, it would have changed the way I went about teaching."

These days, Ovelson, current ILT principal Robinson and the other members of the team go into schools on a daily basis to provide support to teachers and disrupt the traditional isolation of their classroom work. "We're re-envisioning professional learning," says Robinson. "Administrators and teachers are coming together, along with our team, to construct best practices for kids."

Under the ILT, teachers have the freedom to act more like their

pupils, collaborating to solve problems. The district has seen educator and student engagement flourish in many of its institutions—just one happy by-product of this dynamic approach. The shift continues to pay dividends. To date, the ILT has joined forces with teams of teachers in every school throughout the district to address the needs of both students and educators. With each collaboration, a teacher-leader is

born, ready—and happy—to carry the banner of co-operation.

Ovelson was one of the first to support the ILT's professional-learning model, and she remains an advocate. "It's been built from the bottom up, and a lot of trust has been gained along the way," she says. "The learning is as personalized and meaningful for the adults as we want it to be for the children in the classroom. We want everyone to be empowered." **R**



Guy
Tétrault

Second Place \$10,000 **Sun West School Division** **Rosetown, Sask.**

Because technology maximizes learning in rural areas

To say that the Sun West School Division is sprawling doesn't do the district's reach justice. Its director of education, Guy Tétrault, supervises 40 schools over 32,000 square kilometres, with a student body ranging from pre-kindergarten to Grade 12.

A 40-year veteran of the Alberta and Saskatchewan education systems, and the man behind St. Gabriel, Canada's first online middle school, Tétrault doesn't see the distance as an impediment. Rather, it's an opportunity: he wants digital tools to become the norm in his area. While 15 of Sun West's institutions are based in Hutterite colonies that shun technology, digitizing the remaining schools is key if the 4,700 other students in the division are to have access to a curriculum on par with that of their city-based counterparts.

In September 2013, the Sun West school board established a \$1-million

three-year fund to encourage educators to develop innovative projects focused on improving student learning and teaching. These initiatives are increasingly based in “blended learning,” a two-part approach: participants learn in a supervised setting using classroom methods, as well as through online tools; and students also help determine their own time, place, path and pace. In short, blended learning is about personalizing education.

Inside a Sun West classroom, you might find a teacher working face to face with a handful of pupils, kids individually immersed in one of the more than 115 online courses developed by the district’s Distance Learning Centre, and a group collaborating on a project and accessing resources through the Internet. In 2014, close to half of Sun West’s student body was enrolled in online offerings, which

range from a dual-credit business class with the University of Saskatchewan to a forensic-science course.

Each school has an educational assistant trained to help students with digital materials; as well, all teachers receive 15 professional-development days a year. The hope is that this instruction will allow them to amass a skill set befitting a 21st-century educator at ease with the latest digital materials—and excited to be part of a new model for Canadian schools.

“Before the start of the academic year, I had a chat with our district’s 50 new teachers,” says Tétrault. “I said to them, ‘2050: does that mean anything to you? It’s probably when you’re going to retire. You’re going to walk into schools next week and there will be a front door, a hallway, classrooms. If, in the year 2050, you retire from that same school, we will have failed.’ And I truly believe that.” **R**

Curtis
Brown



Third Place \$5,000 **South Slave Divisional** **Education Council** **Fort Smith, N.W.T.**

*Because improving literacy rates
requires local investment*

When Curtis Brown moved from British Columbia to the Northwest Territories 28 years ago, he wasn’t planning to stick around. “Most people who come up from the south think this is



“Reading buddies” at Joseph Burr Tyrrell Elementary in Fort Smith.

an adventure and have no idea they’ll fall in love,” says the superintendent of the South Slave Divisional Education Council (SSDEC). But he stayed put, committing himself to addressing challenges faced by the North’s remote districts: the legacy of residential schools (75 per cent of South Slave’s 1,300 students are Aboriginal), split-grade classes, limited resources and high staff turnover.

In 2006, standardized tests revealed that less than half of SSDEC’s students were meeting the literacy and numeracy standards set by the Alberta government. Enter Leadership for Literacy (L4L), an initiative kick-started by the council and adopted by Brown and educators across the district’s five communities. Each of the SSDEC’s eight schools began by hiring a literacy coach to guide educators through on-the-job “teach-model-practice” instruction. The coaches share five core

strategies (one example is “read aloud,” which, other than the obvious, involves having kids discuss the material and their predictions for what might happen next in the story), demonstrate them in the classroom and provide feedback for teachers once they take the lead. By 2013, three-quarters of South Slave students were reading at or above the Canadian norm.

Bolstered by this significant jump over the 2006 scores, the SSDEC set another ambitious goal: to preserve the indigenous languages of South Slave by consulting local elders, publishing more than 200 books in area dialects and compiling two Chipewyan dictionaries. Linguistic fluency has since risen 18 per cent among children of all ages. A strong sense of identity is critical in northern communities, says Brown. “If students don’t feel proud of where they’ve come from, they’re less likely to be successful. If community members don’t see us as honouring their wealth of knowledge, we’re less likely to be successful, too.”

Paraphrasing John F. Kennedy, Brown likes to remind colleagues that L4L works because success has many parents. Or, as Marnie Villeneuve, an educator and mother in Fort Smith, attests, “Experts are teaching teachers, teachers are teaching teachers, teachers are teaching students, and students are teaching each other as well as their parents.” In South Slave, education is a right and a responsibility—for all. **R**

A Santa-deprived Albertan
embraces the spirit of the season

My Very Muslim Christmas

BY OMAR MOUALLEM FROM *SWERVE*

ILLUSTRATION BY JEN HSIEH



PICTURE MY FAMILY, THE MOUALLEMS, through the bay window of our home as we erect our Christmas tree. It's 1997 in northern Alberta. Snow piles up across the front lawn like arctic dunes.

My brother, Ali, the tallest, has just crowned the tree with a star when, on the count of three, our mother plugs in the lights. Our effervescent smiles radiate almost as brightly. It would be the perfect holiday postcard if not for a few key details.

For one, there are no young children present. At 11, I'm the youngest by three years, which wouldn't be peculiar if not for the fact that it's our first Christmas tree. Oh, and it's not a tree—it's the most robust houseplant we could adorn without having it slouch under the weight.

Also, it's not Christmas. It's Ramadan, Islam's holiest month, a time for fasting, contemplation and prayer, not tinsel and jubilation. Further, it's not even December. In 2015, Ramadan began in June, but because the Islamic calendar moves back 11 days each year, it was late January in 1997 when we put up our decorations.

Another thing you can't see is that it's a secret. My dad is on a trip to his homeland, Lebanon, and is unaware of this brief brush with the Christian holiday. In our household, we celebrated Halloween and birthdays like everyone else. These got a pass. But not Christmas. It was too pervasive, too powerful, too Christian. Once you let it in through your front

door, it turned your Qurans to Bibles, your water to wine, your halal meats into regular meats and your children white. But with Dad away, my sister, Janine, convinced our mom that it would be totally halal if we crossed party lines—*just this once*.

NINETY-TWO PER CENT of Canadians celebrate Christmas, according to a 2011 Abacus Data poll. The other eight per cent, like my family, are often immigrants with strong religious backgrounds. But there were certain cultural pressures my parents couldn't avoid. You can't run a business without a holiday party, for example. So Mom and Dad were sure to keep a Christmas tree in the family restaurant's storage room. The school's annual concert was encouraged, too, so long as we didn't play the role of Joseph or Mary. Christmas carollers were copacetic, as long as they didn't step through the doorway.

And so, like countless other children of the eight per cent, we grew up with a distorted concept of Christmas. While most Canadian kids probably encounter Santa Claus within the first year of their lives—at a parade, in a mall or in their living room—I was four the first time I met him. My mom, perhaps noticing my sense of exclusion, or to

better integrate into her community, took me to the town library, where families lined up to snap photos of their children on the jolly man's lap.

I'm not sure what went through her head as Santa began to ask his stock question, "And what do you want for Christmas, little boy?" thereby raising my mother's commitment to an impossible level. But to me, it was a simple question. I began to list off a bunch of things, real and imaginary: a Ninja Turtles toy, skates, a glove that turns into a sword, a sword that turns into a snack. As he reached into his big red bag, I assumed he was responding to my requests. Instead he handed me a tissue-wrapped mandarin orange.



I COMPENSATED
FOR SANTA'S ABSENCE
BY PLAYING UP
FOR MY FRIENDS
THE JOY OF
"MUSLIM CHRISTMAS."

You're probably too old to remember what you got for your first Christmas, but I'm willing to bet it wasn't miniature fruit. So I did the one thing that leads to Christmas blacklisting: I yanked him by the scruff of his beard and let it snap back into place. This was met with a gasp from onlookers and an unjolly yowl from St. Nick

himself. My parents were undoubtedly relieved to now have a permanent excuse for why Santa never dropped by.

CHILDREN OF A LESSER Santa grow up to have a different outlook. They may, for example, become petty around the holidays. I once threw a tantrum because McDonald's wasn't open on Christmas Day. Even after the curtain is pulled and Santa is revealed to be little more than a credit card, it becomes no easier. Forgoing Christmas becomes a choice—a decision *not* to indulge in what is the best holiday of the year, bar none.

Some children may overcompensate for this absence, as I did. That meant playing up for my friends of the 92 per cent—which, in rural High Prairie, Alta., was more like 99.9 per cent—the joy of "Muslim Christmas."

This holiday is better known as Eid al-Fitr and marks a new lunar cycle at the end of Ramadan. For the first few years of my life, Eid meant going to mosque and maybe getting a new sweater—not exactly reasons for a five-year-old to leap from bed at 6 a.m. But upon reaching the age where one gains a concept of money, I was deemed ready for the traditional gift of cold, hard cash.

It came from aunts and uncles, in bills of blue, purple and green. All we kids had to do in return was kiss the elder on each cheek and recite

an Arabic phrase: "May every year find you in good health." I relished going to mosque on Eid morning because it meant more cheeks and more money. The imam ponied up, too—and I didn't have to sit on his lap. Plus his beard was real.



GIFT GIVING
MAY BE STEEPED IN
CONSUMERISM AND
CAPITALISM, BUT IT IS
NEVERTHELESS THE
LANGUAGE OF LOVE.

There was even a second Eid—Eid al-Adha, sometimes called the "Greater Eid," though to be honest, it wasn't that great. A few bucks in my pocket, but nothing like the windfall Eid al-Fitr brought at the end of Ramadan. I talked it up anyway, back at school following Christmas break. "Oh, you got a new bike? What? That's a new hat? Well, we have two Christmases!"

When these Eids were exactly, I couldn't say: keeping time by the moon is an esoteric science. Not only does the Muslim calendar move back 11 days every year, but the specific day of Eid al-Fitr is determined with just 24 hours' notice, based on a religious authority's observation of a new moon. I described this gentleman

to my friends as a turbaned St. Nick peering through his telescope and then, upon affirming the new moon, pulling the lever that would shower me with cash.

As I grew older, the differences became more marked. In Islam, when one reaches puberty, one is compelled to fast during Ramadan, from sun-up to sundown. No food or drink during daylight hours for a month. Even a fourth grader knows a bait and switch when he sees one.

Ramadan and the Eid celebrations that followed had become 29 or 30 days of hunger followed by a spike in my piggy-bank savings. My morale waned. Relatives tried to up the ante with pinker bills, but it didn't always work. I overheard a cautionary tale about my cousin getting caught in the linen closet with a mouthful of bubble gum. God knows I had my own secrets.

By the time I was 11, Eid didn't arrive with the same level of glee as before. What's worse, Dad was gone all month on his trip to Lebanon, meaning Mom was working more at the family restaurant, and the nightly dinners became my 17-year-old sister's responsibility. Sensing our declining enthusiasm—and perhaps to compensate for her inedible chili—Janine hatched a plan with our mother. "We will be doing Ramadan differently this year," she told Ali and me. "We will be having a Christmas Ramadan."

A FEW DAYS BEFORE the Eid of 1997, my mother walked into my bedroom as I was doing something private: wrapping her presents. I shoved everything under the bed, like a junkie in a drug raid. She started interrogating me. “What are you hiding? Are you keeping secrets from *your mother*?” I showed her the half-wrapped bottle of perfume. She had forgotten about Christmas Ramadan.

Obviously, it wasn’t her thing, but she went along with it anyway, feigning surprise on the morning of Eid al-Fitr and spraying on her neck a scent so cheap and strong I’m surprised it didn’t tranquilize her. This came just after unpacking the stockings—bulky knee-high socks from my sister’s closet. The Mouallems re-enacted the TV Christmas specials the 92 per centers had broadcast into our living rooms for years. Sitting on the floor, in our pyjamas, surrounded by piles of wrapping paper and a very special houseplant, we passed around presents and followed each surprise with a hug. My auntie, who was living with us, gave us all socks, thereby authenticating the occasion.

Maybe my body was just coping with 30 days of starvation and dehydration, but I was overcome with that fabled holiday warmth and fuzziness. It was kind of my relatives to dish out money throughout my childhood, but cash gifts are

about generosity, not understanding. Presents, done well, really make you think of the people in your life. Gift giving may be steeped in consumerism and capitalism, but it is nevertheless the language of love.

The next morning, I descended the stairs in my new socks, entered the living room and rubbed my eyes. The plant was naked; the only trace that remained were the tiny tinsel threads caught in the carpet.

MORE THAN A DECADE would pass before I would have another Christmas, in any month, in any fashion, and the effect was embitterment. *Crass, vulgar, cosmetic, a commercial racket*—I called the yuletide season all of these things. Eventually, I also stopped observing Ramadan and Eid. I became a man without a meaningful holiday.

Until I met my wife, Janae.

Seven years ago, I had my first *real* Christmas. And not just any Christmas, but a Jamieson family Christmas.

The Jamiesons are the focus group for the holidays. Lights, wreath, eggnog—their home in December is a checklist of Christmas classics. There’s a nativity scene set out in the living room, but it’s not so big as to overshadow the presents. Then again, if there were a life-sized animatronic baby Jesus wailing in the corner of the living room, it still wouldn’t deflect attention from the presents.

On my first Christmas morning with them, I entered to find 30 presents piled around the tree, despite there being just four Jamiesons. And 11 stockings! "Are we expecting more family?" I asked. No, my future mother-in-law explained. Two were for the living cats, three were in memory of the deceased cats, one was for my own cat at home. And the last one? "It's for you," she said.

I have felt the softness of a real stocking around my arm now. I have sat around a tree and opened a mystery gift from "Santa." I have gulped rummy eggnog while Mariah Carey's Christmas album plays in the background. It is hokey, and it is wonderful. The holiday spirit has infected me and spread to my extremities. It's evident in my wintry cheer, my presents for the neighbours. I now erect my own tree a full month before my in-laws raise theirs. I am seven in Christmas years, and it shows.

However, until recently, my love of the season was my deepest, darkest family secret. I have broken a great deal of sensitive news to my parents,

but the hardest was coming out of the Christmas closet.

A few Decembers ago, I invited them over. Against the backdrop of our glittering tree and stockings dangling above the crackling fire, I confessed to them that the holiday they'd taught their children to believe was a "them/not us" thing was now a "me" thing. I explained to them that Christmas belongs to all of us—Christians, Muslims, atheists, *Canadians*.

Eight per centers can still cherish Ramadan, Hanukkah or their cultural holidays of choice, but the modern Christmas is non-denominational (sorry, Christians). And we, the eight per centers and 92 per centers alike, can all partake in it.

The decked-out street lamps and office parties. The cashier with the Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer schnozz. The "White Christmas" piano instrumental on the grocery-store speakers. I freely admit the Christmas I love is a consulting-firm holiday, with PR people, interior decorators and CEOs at the heart of the machine, paid to maintain and grow it. But it makes me feel great, so why fight it? **R**

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THE BIG GAMBLE

You will never be completely free from risk if you are free.

EDWARD SNOWDEN



I'VE GOT
THE
LADYBALLS
TO TALK
ABOUT IT.

Women have balls. They're called ovaries. And they're at risk. Ovarian cancer kills five Canadian women every day. Donate at ladyballs.org



Ovarian Cancer Canada
Cancer de l'ovaire Canada



Curling was a go-to hobby among kids in 1970s Nova Scotia. But for a young **Colleen Jones**, it became an obsession that would teach her about winning, losing and everything in between.

Sweep Dreams

FROM *THROWING ROCKS AT HOUSES: MY LIFE IN AND OUT OF CURLING* (WRITTEN WITH PERRY LEFKO)

IT'S IRONIC THAT, while I love telling other people's stories as a reporter, it was only when I started writing this book that I realized I have a hard time telling my own. For some reason, everything I've done seems like nothing special. Maybe it's my upbringing—stay humble—or maybe it's the sport of curling itself. I don't think any curler looks at himself or herself as a star. You can be on top one day and losing the next. It's just the nature of the sport.

My long-time teammate and friend Nancy Delahunt always said about our curling quartet that “we really did feel like we just fell off the turnip truck.” It seemed that every good thing in our career simply landed in place. Other teams were slicker and maybe even had more talent, but we had a chemistry and work ethic that pushed us to greater heights than we had ever expected. I have six Canadian championships and two world titles. Not bad for a team that felt like it fell off the turnip truck.

BOTH MY MOTHER and my father seemed to believe that the devil finds work for idle hands, so they taught their nine children to always keep busy. Curling may not have been part of the family repertoire originally—my parents harboured no desire to throw stones of granite down a sheet of ice—but the sport was quickly embraced. It got a lot of

kids out of the house, and at about \$25 per child for the winter, it was an inexpensive hobby.

We started out at Halifax's Mayflower Curling Club, which is where I spent most of my career. The Mayflower, founded in 1905, has a storied past that goes way beyond throwing rocks. In 1912, it served as a morgue for victims of the *Titanic*. When the recovery boat brought the deceased to Halifax, they put the poor souls in the building's ice shed. The space fulfilled two needs: it was big enough and cold enough. Back then, the club was on Agricola Street, about a 10-minute walk from its current location. Sometimes, when a shot goes wonky, I think the spirits of those lost on the *Titanic* must have moved with the Mayflower.

I had never heard of curling until a neighbour invited my older sister Barb to go to the Mayflower. Barb was hooked. One by one, as we each turned the magical age of 14 and were eligible to join the junior program, we followed our sister to the club. First it was Maureen, then Sheila, and then, in 1973, it was my turn. Monica, Jennifer and Stephanie came later. Only my oldest sister, Roseanne, and the baby of the family, Stephen, didn't play. They preferred that other ice sport, hockey.

The reason we couldn't join the curling club until age 14 probably had something to do with the fact

that to play, a curler has to throw a 42-pound hunk of granite down the ice. (Today there are junior stones that weigh half as much, so kids start curling at age five and six.) But it wasn't just a matter of turning 14; we had to wait for an older sister to give us the nod. It became a rite of passage and something the whole family could celebrate, in a sense.

Mom and Dad rarely came to the club. In hindsight, this allowed us to flourish without the behind-the-glass coaching I witnessed from other parents. It wasn't that ours didn't care; they just considered curling our playtime and didn't interfere.

CURLING IS A GRAND old game invented by the Scots in 1541. It's a little like shuffleboard, a little like bocce and a little like pool, with all the angles. It is about precision shot-making, skill and luck. The sport is played on ice by two teams, each with four members: lead, second, third or vice-skip (or mate, as we call it in Nova Scotia) and skip.

Each player throws twice, alternating throws with the opponents. Curlers throw rocks down to the opposite end of the ice, to the rings called the house. The house is divided into a 12-foot circle, an eight-foot circle, a four-foot circle and the smallest circle in the centre, called the button. The object of the game is to get your rock closer to the button than

your opponent. Once all 16 stones have been thrown, the "end" is complete and a score is recorded. The teams then turn around and throw the rocks back to the house at the other end of the ice. In national and world competitions, the games go to 10 ends, and if a game is tied, it goes into extra ends. I've always compared an end to a baseball inning, except in curling either team can score.



MY SISTERS HAD
SHOWN ME HOW
TO SLIDE ON THE
KITCHEN FLOOR BEFORE
I STARTED GOING TO
THE CURLING CLUB.

It is appropriate that the game is called curling because that's what the rock does—you add a slight twisting motion before you let go of the handle on the rock. By applying either an in-turn or an out-turn, the thrower can control which way the rock curls as it moves down the ice. While the rock is travelling, teammates sweep the ice in front of it to help steer the rock and drag it further. The yells that occur in a curling game are directions to the sweepers, usually to sweep faster and harder. But the strategy is the key to it all, which is why curling is often called chess



In 1982, at 22, Jones became the youngest skip to win a Canadian women's curling championship. Here she is, at left, with Kay Zinck and her sisters Monica and Barb.

on ice. You can throw a “draw” if you want the rock to end up in the house, or you can throw a “hit” to remove your opponent’s rocks from play. Like golf (also invented by the Scots), there are many shots in between the hit and the draw. There are a ton of shrewd decisions to be made in the course of a 10-end game, all of which will affect the outcome.

When I was a child, the Mayflower housed six sheets of ice, and it was always freezing inside. The club was fully booked with league curling through the week, so Saturday mornings were junior time. There wasn’t

a lot of training going on, just kids figuring it out and having fun.

I wasn’t a natural at the game, but I did love it right away. There was something about bundling up in a big wool sweater, being out with your friends, hearing the hum of the ice machine and getting to yell “Hurry hard!” to urge your teammates to sweep harder. Like the old-style corn-straw brooms we used (rather than today’s more efficient push brooms), our equipment wasn’t top-notch. Curlers use special shoes, for instance. One has a Teflon slider that allows you to glide, and the other has

a gripper on it that lets you push off from the “hack” (the starting point). But back when I began, I didn’t have a nice slider. Instead, I used electrical tape on the bottom of my left sneaker.

My sisters had shown me how to slide on the kitchen floor before I started going to the club. Using the cookie cupboard as a hack, we would do our best to mimic a slide wearing just our socks on the old linoleum floor. We didn’t get too far, but it helped our form. Before long, our junior program expanded to after-school practice, and I spent a ridiculous and wonderful amount of time throwing a lot of granite.



I SOUGHT WHATEVER
OUTSIDE HELP I COULD
GET. I READ *KEN
WATSON ON CURLING*.
IT WAS A SIMPLE BOOK,
BUT I MEMORIZED IT.

I did not have a clue how to curl at first. I learned the rules and the basics at the club, but I never witnessed the strategies and different skills used in competitive games. When we played, our master plan consisted of you trying to land one in the circles and your opponent trying to take it out. It still makes me laugh that I became a curling broad-

caster and live in an era in which the sport draws huge TV numbers and can be watched on the Internet.

I sought whatever outside help I could get. I read *Ken Watson on Curling* by the man known for developing the long slide. I loved the black-and-white pictures of Watson throwing with what looked like an old kitchen broom, a fedora on his head, perfect dress pants and a solid-looking slide. His was a simple book with simple ideas, but I memorized it. His seven Cs of curling are still ingrained in my mind: confidence, compatibility, cooperation, competitiveness, courage, consistency and concentration. To this day, I talk about these qualities when I coach juniors. Those seven virtues are what Watson believed a champion required, so I worked hard to hold on to them all.

CURLING SOON BECAME more than a game to me; it became an obsession. I was growing more competitive, and I was restless to improve. It all came to a head in 1976, when I took part in my first Canadian junior tournament at 17 years old. I played second on a team skipped by Kathy Mykety, who was based across the bridge in Dartmouth, along with my sisters Maureen and Sheila. People ask me today how the team was formed, and the truth is, I don’t know. My sisters and I figure that the juniors coordinator, the late Mac MacKinnon, got a call saying

Kathy was looking for three curlers, and it was our good luck to be standing in front of him at the time.



WHAT I REMEMBER
MOST ABOUT THAT
FIRST DAY WAS
THAT WE WEREN'T
WINNING, AND IT
WAS TORTURE.

Suddenly we were playing in “the zones,” the tournament that begins the qualifying process leading up to the nationals. Somehow we won and advanced from the zones to the provincials. There was a blizzard that day, and we were trailing 7-4 with three ends to go. Mostly everyone had gone home, thinking our opponents were going to take it, but we rallied to win 8-7. It was like a Cinderella story. We were excited to triumph at the provincials, of course, but I was also happy just to win a curling iron in a junior Christmas tournament. (I’ve since won toasters, pots and pans, sweaters, drills, coolers, beer steins—you get the idea.) When we were told we were advancing to the nationals, I had no idea what to expect. I hadn’t realized that winning this competition would mean going on to a bigger one. I was simply along for the ride, doing what my big sisters told me to do.

The Canadian Junior Curling Championships is a week-long event that takes place in a different city each year. That time around, it was held in Thunder Bay, Ont. I clearly remember flipping through the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* to figure out exactly where that was. Three weeks after the provincials, our parents piled us into the station wagon and drove us to the airport. Not being curlers, they couldn’t tell us what to expect—we were rookies at all of this.

You never forget your first airplane trip. Sheila, Maureen and I sat shoulder to shoulder and tried our best not to scream with excitement over this whole flying thing.

When we got to Thunder Bay, we marvelled at the snowbanks and the cold, then settled in and got ready to start curling. But we *weren’t* ready. We weren’t used to playing two games a day. Plus, because I was sweeping with a corn broom, my hands bled profusely after a while. What I remember most about that first day, though, was that we weren’t winning, and it was torture. I think my absolute hatred of losing started there, at those first Canadian Juniors. We lost the first two games; I felt better when we won the next three in a row; but then we were defeated in the last four. I remember looking at the other teams and thinking that they seemed really professional compared to us.



(From left) Long-time teammates Nancy Delahunt, Kim Kelly, Jones and Mary-Anne Arsenault, winners of the 2001 World Curling Championships in Switzerland.

Maybe it wasn't just that the other teams were more professional. Even though three out of the four of us were sisters, we all felt extremely homesick. We called our parents on the hotel's phone, saying we wanted to come home. I can still remember telling them: "We hate this. This is horrible." I don't know if it was the losing or being on our own for the first time. I think they told us to buck up, and so we did.

We had gone from the Mayflower Curling Club to the nationals, and it was just too big a leap. Today, things would be different. We would have

been coached all season, and we would have had meetings with a sports psychologist. We would have been ready. But we were young and clueless.

Over the years, I would come to realize there was a lot to learn from losing. Mostly, it was to work harder and practise more. Think of the number of golf balls Tiger Woods must have hit on the practice range to reach the level he did. The same is true in curling. You need to throw a lot of rocks and set up a lot of practice scenarios in order to get better.

And that's exactly what I did. **R**

EXCERPTED FROM *THROWING ROCKS AT HOUSES: MY LIFE IN AND OUT OF CURLING* BY COLLEEN JONES WITH PERRY LEFKO.
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California's four-year drought has made water a precious commodity. Does it also spell the end of avocados?

The *Cost of* GREEN GOLD

BY ADAM STERNBERGH FROM NEW YORK

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVE MURRAY



YOU MAY THINK YOU love avocados, but you probably don't love them as much as the people of Fallbrook, Calif., do. An inland community of 30,354 about 90 minutes north of San Diego, Fallbrook is unofficially known as "the Avocado Capital of the World."

More than 80 per cent of the avocados grown in the United States come from California, and a third of those grown in California come from

within 32 kilometres of this small region. Every April, Fallbrook plays host to the Avocado Festival, a one-day event that draws from 70,000 to 100,000 visitors. The festival features a guacamole contest, with an amateur division and a professional division, and a show featuring avocado-themed art-

work, with separate categories for 2-D creations (e.g., paintings) and 3-D *objets* (e.g., papier-mâché avocados). There's the Little Miss & Little Mister Avocado competition, in which kids are dressed up, pageant-style; and the Best Decorated Avocado contest, in which avocados are dressed up and put on show.

CHARLEY WOLK IS 78 years old and has lived in Fallbrook for more than 40 years. When he bought his first house, he discovered that the

property came with an avocado orchard, and he thought, Now what the hell am I going to do with that?

He studied up on farming and eventually became an avocado-grove manager; he's since served as chairman of the California Avocado Commission and now runs a blog called *Growing Avocados*, on which he's billed as the state's "foremost avocado expert." Back in the late

'90s, when California was selling about 136 million kilograms of avocados a year across the country, the U.S. opened its borders to Mexican avocado imports post-NAFTA, and farmers worried that imports would kill the domestic market.

Wolk foresaw a different future. He told

his colleagues: "You have to get your heads wrapped around a billion pounds of avocados in the U.S." in annual sales. And he was right. Mexican imports made it possible for East Coasters to get avocados year-round, not just during the California season, which lasts roughly from March to September. The avocado went from a grocery-aisle curiosity to a nationwide pantry staple. This, in part, led to an avocado boom that we are still in the midst of today. In 1999, Americans consumed just under a kilogram



per capita; by 2014, that had risen to nearly three kilograms. Global demand for avocados has never been higher. There's just one thing that troubles Wolk: water.

Early this past April, aware that his state was facing the fourth year of a punishing dry spell, California governor Jerry Brown announced mandatory cutbacks on water usage, a first in the state's history. The cutbacks exempted agricultural use, which accounts for 80 per cent of California's human water consumption—an exemption due in part to the fact that the agricultural sector already has a system of restrictions and allotments in place. In California, farmers pay dearly for water—or, more precisely, they pay for the delivery of water—and water is getting very, very expensive.

It takes 72 gallons of water to grow just under a kilogram of avocados, compared to nine gallons to grow the same amount of tomatoes. What's more troubling is that “the issue with water used to be cost,” Wolk says. “Now it's also availability.” The problem is hardly limited to this particular conundrum, but still, if you want to think through what climate change might mean for your daily life, the fate of the avocado is a good place to start.

TECHNICALLY, THE AVOCADO IS a berry. Yet unlike any other berry you can think of, it's not sweet or invit-

ing to eat while still on the branch. The name “avocado” comes from the Aztec word “*ahuacatl*,” which means “testicle,” so named because avocados typically grow in pairs and hang heavy on the tree. Spanish conquistadores came to call them *aguacate*; once exported back to Spain, the fruit became known as *abogado*, a word that meant “advocate” or “lawyer.” The food became a staple in Central and South America but didn't land in California until the late 1840s, when a private citizen imported an avocado tree from Nicaragua.

From the beginning, branding was an issue. In English-speaking North America, avocados were known by the less-than-enticing name “alligator pears.” A 1927 statement attributed to a representative from the California Avocado Growers' Exchange lamented: “That the avocado, an exalted member of the laurel family, should be called an alligator pear is beyond all understanding.”

A subsequent campaign by horticulturalists and growers championed the name “avocado,” but the fruit remained a tough sell for Americans. Avocados are inedible on the tree and take several days to ripen after being picked, so bins of hard, green, underripe avocados often befuddled shoppers.

The avocado pit, meanwhile, is a large and slightly toxic choking hazard; ground-up avocado seed was once used in a South American

folk recipe for rat poison. The fruit's evolutionary heyday was way back in the Cenozoic Era, when the mighty megafauna—ground sloths and mammoths—roamed the wilds of North America. The giant mammals that were able to swallow the fruit whole, then excrete the massive seed elsewhere, went extinct about 13,000 years ago. Avocados only persisted thanks to mismatched evolutionary partners like rodents, which are so-called pulp thieves: animals that hoard avocados to eat the pulp later, inadvertently transporting the discarded pit. (From an evolutionary standpoint, humans are the ultimate pulp thieves.)

Today, we put avocados on everything in sight: sliding them into sandwiches and slicing them over salads; frying them; searing them; serving them on sushi (the Japanese did not invent this; think of the name "California roll"); pestling them into ever-more-complex variants of guacamole. This sudden popularity has something to do with the fact that avocados have come to magically embody contradictory qualities that are especially appealing right now. They're an indulgence that's still a superfood. They're a fruit that's full of fat (but

the good kind of fat!). From such humble origins, the avocado has achieved a cultural cachet that goes far beyond its consumption.

JANUARY THROUGH APRIL IS, traditionally, the wet season in California, and during a two-hour drive south from Los Angeles to Fallbrook last February, the hills

looked reassuringly verdant—green enough, at least, to remind you of what much of southern California is: a natural desert irrigated into a sense of artificial lushness. Talk of the drought, however, hovered like an ambient anxiety. Billboards on the highway pleaded with drivers to "Save Our Water," while



radio ads listed water-saving tips.

I met Charley Wolk in his office. "With avocado trees, we can do what you call 'stumping,'" he explained, describing the process, wherein you cut off all the branches of a tree and let it live for one season without water. The next year, if you resume watering, new branches, and fruit, will grow. But stumping's only a stop-gap solution. If you stump 30 per cent of your grove for one year and the rationing continues to the next season, you have to stump a different 30

per cent, until you eventually run out of grove to stump. In 1991, California farmers stumped their trees, then got an unexpected reprieve. “They called it the March Miracle,” Wolk said. “March came and flooded everything. The quantity problem went away. There was water all over the place.”

This March, however, there was no miracle. Instead, there was a report released by a group of Stanford University scientists titled “Anthropogenic Warming Has Increased Drought Risk in California.” The report noted that there were 14 drought years between 1896 and 1994, and there have been six drought years between 1995 and 2014. According to the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, 46 per cent of California is currently labelled as being in “exceptional drought,” the worst classification.

To make things worse, 2014 was also the warmest year in California’s recorded history. The trouble with exceptionally warm weather is that it exacerbates not only the drought itself but also its effects. You use more water, even as you have less of it. For a while, for farmers, this simply meant that water prices kept rising. When Wolk started farming avocados four decades ago, water cost about US\$72 per acre-foot (roughly 326,000 gallons). Now in some areas it costs about US\$1,500

per acre-foot. I asked Wolk about the potential of desalination, the process by which sea water could be converted to fresh water and used for agriculture. He was realistic. “The price I heard on that is \$2,600 an acre-foot. I just don’t see how you can make that work.”

California isn’t the only source of avocados. Imports, primarily from Mexico and Chile, now make up more than 85 per cent of the avocados consumed in the United States year-round. But those countries have issues of their own. In 1990, Chile had fewer than 3.25 hectares of avocado trees; now it has more than 24 hectares, and large avocado growers are draining the country’s groundwater and rivers faster than they can replenish themselves.

In Mexico, where avocado farms are so lucrative that the fruits are referred to as “*oro verde*,” or “green gold,” the problems are even more troubling. A reported 72 per cent of the avocado plantations in Mexico are located in the state of Michoacán, and much of the industry there is controlled or influenced by the Knight’s Templar drug cartel. The money laundering, extortion and murder around avocados in Michoacán has led writers to equate them with Africa’s blood diamonds; others have adopted the phrase “blood guacamole,” which might sour the mood at your next fiesta.

IF THE MOST DIRE climate predictions for California prove prescient—those that foresee, for example, a 30-, 40-, even a 100-year drought—the avocado is not the agricultural product most likely to disappear from the state. (That would be dairy, which is water-intensive and not geographically dependent.) It's not the food most likely to be permanently priced out of your diet. (That would be almonds—80 per cent of the global supply of which comes from California, and the wholesale price of which has more than tripled since 2001.)

But if you draw a Venn diagram with “West Coast drought-affected agriculture” in one circle and “East Coast foodie-fuelled manias” in the other, smack dab in the ovoid intersection of these circles would sit the avocado. And so it could become the symbol of a pre-climate change era, when we could reasonably expect anything, from anywhere, at any time, to appear on our dinner plates.

“LET ME HAVE A dozen squabs and a large capon,” said a man yesterday to his poultryman in Washington Market. “London is buying our securities, and stocks are booming again.... Asparagus will be the most popular vegetable in the market through the present week.” This is

an excerpt from an article headlined “Asparagus Has a Big Boom,” which appeared in *The New York Times* on May 12, 1895. The economy was rosy, and the future looked bright, so everyone was indulging in asparagus, the exotic delicacy of the day.

Today, California's farmers are searching for new, more efficient ways to grow avocados, and looking to develop heartier, more drought-resistant strains. Eventually, the fruit may become too expensive to be profitable, in which case farmers will be forced to switch to something else, like grapes. Either way, you, the end-user, are increasingly unlikely to find avocados sliced up as a freebie giveaway at a restaurant, next to the omelette.

In some ways, a world of rarefied avocado would stand as a flashback to 1895. Back then, the article reported: “A fruit... made its appearance last week in the fancy fruit stores. It is the alligator, or avocado, pear, very highly esteemed by some persons.”

Since Adam bit into the apple, food has always been about more than sustenance; it's an outward emblem of our moral, economic—and now global and climatological—well-being. From that perspective, the threat of an avocado crisis says more about our future than it does about the fate of an unusual fruit. **R**

As Kids See It



OUR THREE-YEAR-OLD son, Daniel, has a fascination with both animals and babies. We are in the process of teaching him about boundaries when talking to strangers. One day in the elevator, a mother came on with her infant. When Daniel leaned in closely, I gently prompted him: "What should you ask if you want to say hi?" He paused for a moment, then said, "Can I pet your baby?"

MARJORIE MURPHY, Toronto



AND ONE FOR THE KIDS

Q: How does Wayne Gretzky stay cool?

A: He sits next to his fans.

Scholastic Canada

I WAS WORKING A SHIFT as a volunteer at our local museum. My only visitors that day were a mother, her nine-year-old son and her seven-year-old daughter. While his mom was filling in the guest book, I called the boy over and said, "I've got something for you. Hold out your hand." I stamped the back of his hand with the museum logo and told him, "Next time you visit, you can get in for free." He bragged to his younger sister, "Look what I got! Next time I get in free!" The girl turned to him, sighed dramatically and asked, "And exactly how much did you pay to get in this time?"

ED NICHOLSON, Ladysmith, B.C.

Do your children make you chuckle? A funny kid story could get you a free year's subscription. See page 13 for details.



*Sukari the Masai giraffe
is disturbed by men
with large cameras.*

Can a giraffe get anxious? Can sheep feel depressed?
Animal behaviourist Vint Virga thinks so.

CREATURE DISCOMFORTS

BY ALEX HALBERSTADT FROM *THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE*

DR. VINT VIRGA LIKES to arrive at a zoo before it opens and watch the animals. That's because what to an average visitor resembles frolicking, restlessness or boredom looks to Virga like a veritable Russian novel of truculence, joy, horniness, ire, melancholy and even humour.

Interpreting animal behaviour isn't easy. Do you know what it means when an elephant lowers

its head and folds its trunk underneath it? Or when a red fox screams, sounding disconcertingly like an infant?

Virga does. He's a behaviourist whose job is tending to the psychological welfare of animals in captivity. The profession is strange by nature: declaring that you're an expert is sometimes enough to be taken for one.

Most behaviourists are former animal trainers; Virga happens to be a veterinarian. The 57-year-old works with zoos in the United States, where he is based, as well as some in Europe. Like most mental-health professionals, he believes his patients possess vibrant personalities and emotional lives.

The notion that animals think and feel makes all kinds of scientific types uncomfortable. In 2012, Dr. Philip

Low, chairman, CEO and chief scientific officer at neurotechnology company NeuroVigil and a research affiliate at MIT, authored "The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness in Human and Nonhuman Animals." It was signed by leading neuroscientists and animal researchers. "If you ask my colleagues

whether animals have emotions and thoughts," Low says, "many will drop to a whisper or change the subject. They don't want to touch it."

That may be changing. Recent studies have shown animals are far closer to us than we believed—it turns out that shore crabs feel and remember pain, and dogs experience elation in their owners' presence.

Virga isn't a researcher; his convictions about animal individuality predate the recent science. Zoos call

him when animals develop ailments that vets and keepers can't address: he has treated depressed snow leopards, brown bears with obsessive-compulsive disorder and phobic zebras.

"Scientists say that we don't know what animals feel because they can't report their inner states," Virga says. "But they *are* reporting their inner states; we're just not listening."



AS A KID, VIRGA LIKED BEING ALONE WITH ANIMALS. "THEY UNDERSTOOD ME BETTER THAN MY FAMILY."

THERE'S NO denying the public qualms about keeping animals captive. Much of the mistrust that clings to zoos stems from their less-than-benevolent past. "Zoos typically had an all-male, high school-educated workforce," Mark C. Reed, executive director of the Sedgwick County Zoo in Wichita, Kan.,

recalls. "Administering a sedative meant using a dart gun; at the sight of it, the terrified animal would panic."

Today, methods such as positive reinforcement—the use of clickers and treats to reward desired behaviours—have replaced angry gestures and sprays from a water hose. More and more, zoo-exhibit designers are guided by the ethos of enrichment, which Virga defines as "attempting to give animals a stimulating environment and an abundance of choices."

But can improved conditions justify captivity? One case study turned out to be his patient Molly, an aoudad, more commonly known as a Barbary sheep, at Roger Williams Park Zoo in Providence, R.I. Virga has worked with the zoo for nine years. I joined him as he was about to begin his rounds. We met Molly in the enclosed, hay-carpeted barn where she spends her nights. She sniffed at me and then bleated an abrupt greeting—or maybe it was a warning.

Molly had been a typical seven-year-old aoudad when she lost control over her tail, which Barbary sheep use to signal danger and bat away insects. The area under her immobile appendage became vulnerable to infection, and the zoo's staff made the decision to amputate.

Shortly after, Molly grew agitated and twitchy. She began to confine herself to three spots in the exhibit, where she stood scanning the air for non-existent insects, and lost interest in the other aoudads.

The initial plan was to redirect her attention, tempting her with hay, leaves on a branch, a mudhole—Molly ignored every overture. Virga tried to habituate her to the flies, giving her grain when she grew calm, but the changes were slow.

Reluctantly, Virga prescribed Prozac. Within weeks, Molly began to eat more, and after months of work, Virga eased her back into the flock.

Virga says that, in the arid mountains of North Africa, where most aoudads live, Molly would have been eaten by a leopard or a caracal. “A lot of people might say that it is part of the natural order that Molly would have been eaten, that it’s preferable to her being on display at a zoo,” he says. “Except, I think if you could ask her, Molly would tell you that she prefers not to be a leopard’s meal.”

VIRGA IDENTIFIED WITH animals early on. Growing up in suburban San Diego in the '60s, his favourite pastime was hanging around the horses at nearby stables. Later, he got a summer job at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in San Diego, where he cared for sea lions. Mostly, Virga enjoyed being alone in nature or with animals. “They understood me better than my family,” he says.

After graduating from veterinary school in 1987, Virga was hired by an animal clinic in Oregon. In the early '90s, he had an epiphany while treating a flat-coated retriever named Pongo who'd been hit by a car. Pongo's pulse was weak, his breathing laboured. The dog was dying. Virga checked in on him at 3 a.m. and saw Pongo's condition had worsened. Resigned, he filled out medical records while draping his other hand over Pongo's back. The dog's pulse grew stronger, and by the time the sun rose, he was nuzzling in Virga's lap.



Virga feeds Molly, a Barbary sheep with a history of depression.

There was no sound medical reason for the recovery. Virga couldn't escape the conviction that the physical contact and the closeness had effected the sudden change. In the coming years, Virga noticed similar recoveries. In 1994, he left general practice, eventually enrolling in a postgraduate animal-behaviour residency at Cornell University in New York.

A second epiphany happened a few years later at a zoo where Virga was a resident. He was working with a clouded leopard who occupied a roughly 3.5-metre-by-7.5-metre space containing little except a dead eucalyptus tree and a jungle mural. The leopard perched on the tree and stared vacantly ahead.

Virga watched the animal for hours, both at the zoo and on videotapes at home, but could find nothing obviously wrong. "She had lost all interest in her world because it offered nothing to do or to explore," he tells me. "You could say that she was suffering from severe clinical depression." The case made Virga determined to help zoo animals however he could.

I asked Virga to come with me to a large U.S. zoo that was in the midst of a transition from old-fashioned habitats to more considered ones. The brown bears nearby were playing in a swimming hole, with trees and places to climb. Later, we spotted two black panthers in a space smaller than a one-room apartment. Their sleek bodies were contracted and their expressions wan. Virga watched them for maybe 20 minutes. "This is the worst thing I've seen in a long time," he said, then turned and wiped his eyes.

Back at Roger Williams, several staff told me privately that they felt uncomfortable talking about what animals felt, especially in front of supervisors, but they were convinced the creatures had thoughts and emotions.

"Most reasonable people will be on the side of animals being sentient creatures. There is plenty of good, convergent 'weight of evidence' for this," explains Jaak Panksepp, a professor at Washington State University who has studied emotional responses in animals such as rats, dogs and

crayfish, as well as in humans. “But all good scientists tend to be skeptics. The problem is, if you’re going against existing scientific biases, you’re not likely to get your research funded.”

Irene Pepperberg, a comparative psychologist at Harvard University in Massachusetts, recalls comments from colleagues on an early grant proposal to study verbal comprehension in African grey parrots: “One of the notes was, ‘What is this woman smoking?’”

In the past, Virga was timid about expressing his convictions. “But we get to a point in our careers when we say, ‘This is what I feel,’” he says. “And now my job is to prove it.” He’s convinced he could not be effective at work without understanding animals’ complex personalities and psychological lives.

IT’S SOBERING TO imagine people at a zoo from the animals’ perspective. During a trip Virga and I took to Central Park Zoo in New York City, we watched a man nearly bayonet a red panda with a camcorder-and-zoom-lens combo of early microwave-oven dimensions.

I saw the fallout of photographic harassment when I visited Sukari, a 22-year-old Masai giraffe at Roger Williams. The giraffe had developed a fear of men with large cameras and eventually began refusing meals. Over a few months, her weight dropped

from around 839 kilograms to about 725. After a while, she wanted no part of the public side of the yard.

Zoo vets examined her mouth for an abscess or an oral lesion, but nothing appeared to be amiss. Sukari was given antacids and painkillers until colic was ruled out.

“With animals, we often don’t know the reason for a behaviour,” Virga says. “And searching for a cause can be a time-consuming trap. The important thing is treating the symptoms.” Virga spent entire afternoons with Sukari. He eased her closer to visitors and rewarded her each time with leafy branches, her favourite food.

Often he simply waited, remembering the lesson of Pongo: that the relationship itself was sometimes the best medicine. Gradually, Sukari’s weight rose. Virga knew he wasn’t likely to cure her, yet the giraffe’s fear of cameras continued to fade.

BEFORE WRAPPING UP at Roger Williams, I looked in on Molly. She was vigilantly standing on a rock. Just then, five or six teenagers with Down’s syndrome wandered in. They regarded Molly with remarkable seriousness. “What is it thinking?” a girl asked. Everyone stood looking, the teenagers at the aoudad and the aoudad at the teenagers, until Molly hopped down from the rock and darted away. **R**



They crossed paths, laughed, and then
they drove off into the L.A. afternoon.
The day that Stan met Ollie.

The Laurel and Hardy Love Affair

FROM 1990
CONDENSED FROM THE SHORT STORY **BY RAY BRADBURY**
ILLUSTRATION BY ADELA KANG

HE'D CALLED HER Stanley, she'd called him Ollie.

She was 25 when they met at one of those cocktail parties where everyone wonders what they are doing there. But no one goes home, so everyone drinks too much and lies about how grand it all was.



"I KNOW THE EXACT PLACE WHERE LAUREL AND HARDY, IN 1932, CARRIED THAT PIANO CRATE UP AND DOWN 131 STEPS," SHE SAID.

They were, in fact, ricocheting through a forest of people, but locked in the exact centre of the fruitless mob. They dodged left and right a few times, then laughed, and he, on impulse, seized his tie and twiddled it at her. Smiling, she lifted her hand to pull the top of her hair into a frowzy tassel, blinking and looking as if she had been struck on the head.

"Stan!" he cried, in recognition.

"Ollie!" she exclaimed. "Where have you *been*?"

"Why don't you do something to *help* me?" he exclaimed, making wide, fat gestures. They grabbed each other's arms, laughing.

"I..." she said, and her face brightened even more. "I know the exact

place, not two miles from here, where Laurel and Hardy, in 1932, carried that piano crate up and down 131 steps."

"Well," he cried, "let's get *out* of here!"

His car door slammed, his car engine roared.

Los Angeles raced by in late-afternoon sunlight.

He braked where she told him to park.

"I can't believe it," he murmured. "Are *those* the steps?"

"All 131 of them." She climbed out of the car. "Come on, Ollie."

"Very well, Stan," he said.

They gazed up along the steep incline of concrete steps. Her voice was wonderfully quiet.

"Go on up," she said. "Go on. Go."

He started up the steps, counting, and with each half-whispered count, his voice took on an extra decibel of joy. By the time he reached 57, he was lost in time.

"Hold it!" he heard her call, far away. "Right there!"

He held still. She had a camera in her hands. When he saw it, his right hand flew instinctively to his tie to flutter it on the evening air.

"Now *me*!" she shouted and raced up to hand him the camera. He marched down and looked up, and there she was, doing the thin shrug and the puzzled, hopeless face of Stan. He clicked the shutter, wanting to stay there forever.

She came slowly down the steps and peered into his face.

"Why," she said, "you're *crying*."

He looked at her eyes, which were almost as wet as his.

"Another fine mess you've got us in," he said.

"Oh, Ollie," she said.

"Oh, Stan," he said.

He kissed her, gently.

And then he said, "Are we going to know each other forever?"

"Forever," she said.



"WERE YOU EVER
REALLY KISSED BEFORE
I KISSED YOU?"
HE ASKED.
"NEVER!"
"NOR WAS I."

FROM THAT TWILIGHT hour on the piano stairs, their days were long and full of that amazing laughter that paces the beginning and run-along rush of any great love affair. They stopped laughing only long enough to kiss and stopped kissing only long enough to laugh.

They went to see new films and old films, but mainly Stan and Ollie. They memorized all the best scenes and shouted them back and forth as they drove around midnight Los Angeles.

She let her soul flow over into him like a tipped fountain, and he received it and gave it back and was glad.

And during that year, they went up and down those long piano steps at least once a month and discovered an incredible thing. "I think it's our mouths," he said. "Yours is the most amazing in the world, and it makes me feel as if mine were amazing, too. Were you ever really kissed before I kissed you?"

"Never!"

"Nor was I. To have lived this long and not known mouths."

"Dear mouth," she said, "shut up and kiss."

But then, at the end of the first year, they discovered an even more incredible thing. He worked at an advertising agency and was nailed in one place. She was employed at a travel agency and would soon be working abroad. Both were astonished they had never considered this before. They sat and looked at each other one night and she said, faintly, "Goodbye."

"What?" he asked.

"I can see 'Goodbye' coming."

He looked at her face, and it was not sad like Stan's in the films, but just sad like hers.

"Stan," he said, "you'll never leave me."

But it was a question, not a declaration, and suddenly she moved, and he blinked at her and said, "What are you doing there?"

"I'm kneeling," she said, "and asking you for your hand. Marry me, Ollie. Come away with me to France. I'll support you while you write the great American novel."

"But..." he said.

"You've got your portable typewriter, a ream of paper and me. Say it, Ollie. Will you come?"

"And watch us go to hell in a year and bury us forever?"



THEY DID NOT STOP,
BUT HE HEARD HER
CALL BACK,
"ANOTHER FINE
MESS YOU'VE
GOT US IN!"

"Are you that afraid, Ollie? Don't you believe in me or you or anything? God, why are men such cowards? Listen. This is my one and only offer, Ollie. I've never proposed before, I won't ever propose again. It's hard on my knees. Well?"

"Have we had this conversation before?" he said.

"A dozen times in the last year, but you never listened. You were hopeless."

"No, in love and helpless."

"You've got one minute to make up your mind," she said. "Sixty seconds."

She was staring at her wristwatch.

"Get up off the floor," he said, embarrassed.

"If I do, it's out the door and gone," she said.

"Stan," he groaned.

"Thirty," she read her watch.

"Twenty. I've got one knee off the floor. Ten. I'm beginning to get the other knee up. Five. One."

And she was on her feet.

"Now," she said, "I'm heading for the door. We are very special, wondrous people, Ollie, and I don't think our like will ever come again in the world. But I must go. And now," she reached out. "My hand is on the door and..."

"And," he said, quietly.

"I'm crying," she said.

He started to get up, but she shook her head.

"No, don't. If you touch me, I'll cave in. I'm going. But once a year I'll show up at our flight of steps, no piano, same hour, same time as that night when we first went there, and if you're there to meet me, I'll kidnap you, or you me."

"Stan," he said.

"My God," she mourned.

"What?"

"This door is heavy. I can't move it." She wept. "There. It's moving. There." She wept more. "I'm gone."

The door shut.

HE WENT BACK to the steps on October 4 every year for three years, but she wasn't there. And then he forgot for two years, but in the sixth year he remembered and went back in the late sunlight and walked up the stairs because he saw something halfway up, and it was a bottle of good champagne with a ribbon and a note on it, delivered by someone, and the note read: "Ollie, dear Ollie. Date remembered. But in Paris. Mouth's not the same, but happily married. Love, Stan."

And after that, he simply did not go to visit the stairs.

TRAVELLING THROUGH FRANCE
15 years later, he was walking on the Champs-Élysées at twilight one afternoon with his wife and two daughters, when he saw this handsome woman coming the other way, escorted by a very sober-looking older man and a very handsome, dark-haired boy of 12.

As they passed, the same smile lit both their faces in the same instant.

He twiddled his necktie at her.

She tousled her hair at him.

They did not stop, but he heard her call back, "Another fine mess you've got us in!" And she added the name by which he had gone in the years of their love.

His daughters and wife looked at him, and one daughter said, "Did that lady call you Ollie?"

"What lady?" he said.

"Dad," said the other daughter, leaning in to peer at his face. "You're crying."

"No."

"Yes, you are. *Isn't* he, Mom?"

"Your papa," said his wife, "as you well know, cries over telephone books."

"No," he said, "just 131 steps and a piano. Remind me to show you girls someday."

They walked on, and he turned and looked back. The woman turned at that very moment. Maybe he saw her mouth pantomime the words, "So long, Ollie." Maybe he didn't. He felt his own mouth move, in silence: "So long, Stan." And they walked in opposite directions along the Champs-Élysées in the late light of an October sun. **R**



SKIMMING THE SURFACE

I wish America would spend even half as much time
complaining about plastics in our oceans
as we do about actresses' plastic surgery.

BETTE MIDLER

When **Jacob Richler** helps his mother sort through her extensive book collection, he unpacks new stories about his famous family

A Library *of* Memories

FROM ZOOMER



*Jacob Richler's
father, Mordecai,
at his writing desk
in Montreal.*



LATE IN THE SUMMER OF 2014, after several years residing in Toronto, my mother decided that the time had finally come to put her Montreal apartment on the market. That sprawling flat in the Château Apartments—just across the street from Holt's and the Ritz—had been in the family since 1980. I'd grown up there. And so I booked off a few days to accompany my mother to Quebec to help her sort through the shocking amount of stuff that had accumulated over three and a half decades.

"It's hardly necessary," my mother protested at the time. "I don't really intend to take anything at all. No furniture, certainly. Simply a few special things."

As I remembered it, she had expressed a similar sentiment in 2011 as we had prepared to pack up our family cottage on Lake Memphremagog, in Quebec's Eastern Townships. That move eventually played out with 10,000 kilos of freight heading off to seven different destinations—one of them the Montreal apartment, where those boxes were still unpacked. On the other hand, we had also managed to shed over 5,000 volumes, all donated to Concordia University, to establish their Mordecai Richler Reading Room, a display anchored by my father's old writing desk from his lakeside office.

THERE WAS ANOTHER, far grander desk in Montreal—an antique oak rolltop my mother had bought at an estate sale shortly after our arrival in Canada from England in 1972. It's a beauty. And while it was less my father's style than was the improvised drafting table he'd used at the cottage, Dad had left his personal imprimatur on the thing: black scorch marks. As the story goes, my father had just telephoned his Toronto publisher, Jack McClelland, to announce the completion of a manuscript—probably *Joshua Then & Now*—when, in his distraction, he'd missed the ash-tray and instead put his cigar down on the stack of paper in question, setting alight the only existing copy of his latest book. Fortunately, he always worked with a pot of tea at hand.

When Mum told me the desk was mine, I was delighted. But that said, after the cottage library cleanout to Concordia, what I really wanted was an assortment of books from our Montreal library. Not thousands, just 100 or 200 select volumes, so my family library in Toronto could boast a more conspicuous continuity with the one with which I'd grown up. I wanted a slice of family heritage. My mother seemed pleased to accommodate—as long as she could be involved in the choosing.

So, sometime on the afternoon of our second day of packing, I gently steered her into the living room and

then into an armchair. I handed her a glass of a preferred Meursault, and she got comfortable, in that elegant sitting pose of hers that never looks comfortable at all—legs to one side, held together parallel, all the way down through ankles and toes.

All around was chaos.

Full boxes stacked high; half-full ones awaiting completion; and empty ones ready for something new. Tape guns, tape rolls and felt pens were scattered here and there, along with

the task of separating the enduring works from the forgettable was easy. Still, the cull was tricky at times. In particular, I wanted my mother's input on assessing many of the older books, and this mission came with a significant complication: for the better—no, worse—part of a decade, my octogenarian mother has been legally blind.

"What's this one?" she asked, carefully handling an aging hardcover she had picked up from the top of a stack



MY MOTHER IS AVERSE TO BEING RUSHED. NO MATTER THAT WE STILL HAD 2,000 MORE BOOKS TO GO THROUGH.

stacks of large round stickers, each of their colours a code for a different shipping destination. Everywhere else, there were books. They were piled in teetering stacks on the coffee table and the side tables. They were heaped according to theme in huge mounds on the floor, and they still filled an enormous bookshelf that nearly covered the room's only uninterrupted wall. There were four other bookshelf-lined rooms to go.

WE COULD NOT and did not want to bring all of these books with us, but we wanted some. For the most part,

near her. She was turning it over slowly and examining it as best she could. "It's definitely familiar."

A Crown of Feathers and Other Stories by Isaac Bashevis Singer.

"Ah, yes—I met him at a book launch," she recounted of the late Nobel laureate. "Mordecai had gone off to fetch a drink for himself, and when he returned, Isaac told him he was interrupting. 'You should go away,' he said. 'I'm in the middle of proposing to your wife.' He was really quite fond of Mordecai, and he enjoyed teasing him."

So the Singer was a keeper, then.

I put the book in a fresh box and stuck a red label on its lid and flank so that when the movers got to Toronto, they would drop it at my place. Then I identified for my mother the next book she had picked up: *Nine Plays*, Eugene O'Neill, 1952.

Not good enough. My mother is averse to being rushed. No matter that we had 1,000 or 2,000 more books to go through, along with everything else, and the movers were coming in two days. She still wanted to know the titles of each of the nine plays in the anthology, so I read them to her.

"How odd that *A Long Day's Journey Into Night* is not included," she remarked when I was done. "I dragged Mordecai to see Lawrence Olivier in that once. Poor Mordecai. He was quite miserable."

I could relate. In New York, she once took me to see Glenda Jackson in *Strange Interlude*—and only when I was safely settled in my seat did she casually reveal that this experimental play of O'Neill's had a running time of just a tick under five hours.

That was a long night's journey to dinner if ever I knew one.

And unlike *Long Day's Journey, Strange Interlude* had been included in this particular collection, so I put it in with Singer as a memento. Meanwhile, my mother had picked up a 1951 edition of Herman Melville's *Billy Budd and Other Stories*.

"You know, Bill Shatner did *Billy Budd* in Montreal in '48, or perhaps '49," she recalled. "He was very good. He actually could act. Then we were talking afterwards, and I said the play was interesting, and he looked at me intently and said, 'But Florence—what is life?' How very actorish."

Next was *A Sportsman's Notebook* by Ivan Turgenev ("I introduced Mordecai to Turgenev, to *Oblomov*, not very successfully.") and then *Aura* by Carlos Fuentes ("He was a diplomat, you know? He wrote very lucidly."). She followed up with her 1912 edition of Darwin's *Naturalist's Voyage in HMS Beagle*, which came with a good story, too lengthy and complicated to encapsulate here.

I kept her copy of *The Master of Petersburg* by J.M. Coetzee because I still vividly recall her taking me decades ago to hear the writer read from his Booker-winning *Life & Times of Michael K*, an experience that set me off on a multi-book Coetzee tear. I kept a couple of Beryl Bainbridge, too.

"Oh, Beryl," she said. "Mordecai was very fond of her, and she of him. I remember the two of them together at the Booker, quite smashed and really having fun."

Then I came across an oddity very much up my alley: *Cent Restaurants de Paris, choisis par Odette Pannetier, Commandeur du Tastevin*. The Paris restaurant guidebook was dated 1956, which, in my mother's chronology,



Mordecai Richler in 1990, the year his novel Solomon Gursky Was Here came out; Florence Richler's comp card from her modelling days in the 1950s.

fits in the brief interlude between her first husband and my father.

"I was visiting Paris with an early boyfriend. I did my research, but he certainly knew where to go. His father had a château with a vineyard in Bordeaux. Two, actually. He was lovely to me. But, of course, I didn't want to spend my life hosting dinner parties at a château in Bordeaux."

"Well, of course not," I replied disingenuously. Silence descended upon us as I tried to conjure the hellish repercussions for me—if I existed—had my

mother negotiated this particular fork in the road of her life a little differently.

"The vineyards..." I asked tentatively. "They weren't, like, first growth-type Bordeaux vineyards, by any chance?"

No comment. No details proffered. We moved on.

Next up was a copy of *Paris Underground*, a wartime memoir by New York housewife Etta Shiber about being trapped in Paris during the Nazi invasion and then working with the Resistance to help English soldiers escape occupied France. Inside,

written in some early unrecognizable version of my father's handwriting, were the words, "Ex Libris-Mordecai Richler, Oct. 22, 1943."

We were startled. Dad had never struck either of us as the type to write "ex libris" in his books. But in October '43, he was 12, so I kept that one, too.

SOMEHOW WE GOT through it all and packed up the apartment in three long days. A few months later, at the other end, when I finally got around

took her out for a grand lunch, relying on her second-favourite pleasure (great food and wine) to help unleash truths about her long relationship with her primary pleasure—reading.

"I like to think I was born with it," she told me as we settled in with some oysters.

Whether she likes to think so or not is moot: the facts are plain. In my mother's childhood home in Point St. Charles, then a rough, working-class district of Montreal, there were just



DESPITE HAVING LOST HER SIGHT, MUM STILL HAS AT LEAST THREE BOOKS ON THE GO AT ANY GIVEN TIME.

to unpacking those boxes in my house in Toronto, just about every volume I pulled out brought me back to the time we had spent together—and specifically, what so many of those books had taught me about Mum's past.

But ironically, there was one big thing the books had not revealed: how it was that my mother had become a reader. An insatiable reader who, despite having lost her sight and now requiring the help of magnification devices that amplify each letter in a word to the size of a toonie, still has at least three books on the go at any given time. So, looking for answers, I

three books, displayed neatly on a bathroom shelf. Her parents could not read them—they were both illiterate.

My grandfather signed his name with an X. He served in the Great War. When my uncle followed suit and went off to fight in '39, he wrote letters home. My mother read them to her parents. When her father wanted to answer them, my mother coached him through his laboured, short replies to the front.

"I had won the school spelling bee," she told me of that period. "I was very good at finishing words when provided only the first syllable."

The first syllable was all her parents could supply when testing her, but her maternal grandfather provided more—much more. He was a keen reader and kept a modest library at his house, which was halfway between my mother's home and her school. And while he hadn't seen to it that his own daughter learned to read (finding a husband was the important thing then), he did take unexpected interest in his granddaughter's reading habits. "He was the strong influence. He lent me many books. He said to me, 'Anyone can read—but you have to understand. You have to use what you read.'"

Reading became the foundation for her first serious friendship, at age 12.

"I had one special girlfriend, called Margaret. We became inseparable. We didn't talk much, though. We mostly sat on a park bench together and read. We passed books back and forth."

Not long thereafter, reading led indirectly to her first innocent, but awakening, awareness of men, in the adult sense. "We had a temporary English teacher. I remember him perched on

my desk. He was introducing the class to Charles Lamb. I was very aware of his right knee inadvertently touching mine. He asked the class if anyone had read Charles Lamb. I proffered a hand. I had read *Tales From Shakespeare*."

Within a couple of years, her schooling ended. She had the excellent marks then required to carry on to university, but her parents insisted she enter the workforce. "I would have given my eye teeth to be allowed to attend. For the first time in my life, I was deeply resentful. Deeply!"

She stuck to her books.

Her first husband, Stanley Mann, was a playwright, a novelist and a very successful screenwriter. We were well into the fourth course of our meal by the time we got to my father.

"I wonder if I would have fallen so deeply in love with Mordecai," my mother said, "if I had not seen my grandfather surrounded by those towers of books. They were such an influence on my life."

A life of two intertwined loves: my father and great books. All the better to have some of both in mine. **R**

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WHAT YOU HEAR IS WHAT YOU GET

Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will
make me go in a corner and cry by myself for hours.

ERIC IDLE



While visiting Newfoundland's
abandoned outport communities,
a writer travels back in time

The **World** **Across** *the* **Way**

BY CRAILLE MAGUIRE GILLIES

FROM *EIGHTEEN BRIDGES*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SHEN PLUM

CENTREVILLE SITS ON THE NORTHEAST ARM OF NEWFOUNDLAND, about a three-and-a-half-hour drive from St. John's, and is not near the centre of anywhere at all. To get there, I exited the Trans-Canada Highway and headed 90 minutes down a two-lane road studded with small towns. The speed limit most of the way was 40 kilometres an hour, which Newfoundlanders appeared to universally obey. Eventually, the car ahead pulled over to let me pass.

I arrived by late morning, but Centreville was so inconspicuous that I was in the neighbouring village before I realized I'd missed it. I did a U-turn and headed past the town hall and the blueberry-processing plant, and a few moments later arrived at the home of Esther and Stu Rogers.

Esther greeted me at the back door, clasping my hand and leading me past two coolers packed with a picnic lunch. Esther and her husband, Stu, are 77 and 80 respectively. They've lived in Centreville since 1960, when everyone from their outport communities—she's from Fair Island, he's from the Round Harbour area on Pork Island—packed up and sailed their worldly goods to the mainland. They abandoned their homes during Joey Smallwood's resettlement programs—the then-premier believed that fishermen were living an impoverished, Third World life. Modernization through fish-processing plants, hydroelectric plants and paper mills, he thought, would bring them all prosperity.

Esther and Stu kept a cabin 20 minutes away by boat and were taking me for a visit. It was not only a gesture of Newfoundland hospitality, but also to give me a glimpse of what life had been like for traditional outport communities—clusters living in ports off the mainland—before people had been forced to resettle. I'd seen '50s-era photos of saltbox homes being towed across the water to new settlements during the government's long, fraught relocation program, but could only imagine the places they'd come from.

When Smallwood became premier in 1949, approximately 345,000 people lived in the province. "It has long been felt by thoughtful people that the terribly scattered nature of our population has made it very expensive for the government to provide public services to all the people," he said in 1957.

It was time for Newfoundlanders to let go of the "old traditional ways," in the words of a brochure from the 1960s. Relocation was the only strategy that could prepare "the next



(Clockwise from top) Fair Island in 1944; a house being towed from Fair Island to Centreville in 1960; a recent view of Centreville, years after resettlement.

generation” for a future in a modern, urban society.

“One thing we will not do is force anyone to move. That would be dictatorship,” Smallwood said. He told fishermen to burn their boats, and he promised new jobs. He spoke gallantly of “reception centres” and “growth areas.”

Centreville was one such growth area, a manufactured town forged

from the adrenalin of collective desperation and the autocratic ambitions of a man who had once brazenly called himself “the last father of Confederation.”

AT THE HARBOUR, Stu steadied the three-person skiff, and Esther and I handed down coolers and jugs of water. It was cloudy, and the air smelled of woodsmoke.



When the people of Fair Island, Round Harbour and the other tiny hamlets decided to hang up their fishing nets, they ran their schooners aground and moved to Centreville to work in forestry. Families all across Newfoundland floated their homes to similar “growth centres” or loaded them on government resettlement barges because they couldn’t afford to leave them behind.

In 1961, a fire destroyed the area around Centreville. (Rumours were

arched into the air, known as Whale’s Back. After 10 minutes, we reached the dock at Fair Island, which was settled at the end of the 18th century and had a population of 750 when it was abandoned nearly two centuries later. Despite the government’s directive to never return, many people built new cabins and, today, still vacation on the plots where their families had once lived. Esther and I climbed ashore, and Stu hung back in the boat, agreeing to pick us up



WE HEADED TOWARD A ROCKY HILL THAT WAS COVERED WITH CRACKERBERRIES. “I USED TO RUN UP THIS HILL,” ESTHER SAID.

that it had started at a lobster cook-out in Traverse Brook.) “The last two houses were hardly in the water when the fire came through,” said Esther.

Stu pointed the skiff toward the open water. “There was a time when you saw more boats on the water than cars on the road,” he said.

“See that opening?” said Esther, looking toward the near distance between two islands. “If you went over there, you could go all the way across the Atlantic.”

We passed Yellow Fox Island and Silver Fox Island and Sydney Cove. We saw a smooth granite rock that

at the other end of the island to save Esther the walk back.

We headed toward a short, rocky hill that was covered with crackerberries. Esther has arthritis in her hips but was compelled to keep walking. “I used to run up this hill,” she said. She knew what was on the other side but wanted to have a look anyway. To our right was an old cemetery with white stone markers; to the left, a slope of rocks she and her friends had played on. This was how they spent their evenings on Fair Island as children, walking and running over the rocks, ice-skating in winter on a frozen bog.

Down among the cabins were white signs where the town store and a church and other establishments had been. In the '40s, people from Pork Island, Sydney Cove, Round Harbour and the other smaller isles—the “people across the tickle”—came to Fair Island to shop. The islet had a government wharf and a one-legged postmaster who would stump out to the point and raise a flag to tell someone on the next island over that they had a telegram. (At the Resettlers

they readied the dough for the next day's bread.

As in other parts of Newfoundland, the men were often away, cutting trees in winter and travelling to Labrador to fish in late spring. When they returned, the entire family cured the catch.

Stu followed in the boat as we walked along Fair Island. We passed a small green cabin that belonged to Esther's family. It hadn't been kept up and looked as hospitable as a garden



BEFORE RESETTLEMENT, THE PEOPLE OF FAIR ISLAND WERE ISOLATED. BUT BACK THEN THERE WAS NO TIME TO BE BORED.

Museum, close to the Rogers's Centreville house, I saw the postmaster's wooden leg on display. It was a kind of puppet, with ropes to manipulate the limb and a socket for the knee.)

The people of Fair Island and Round Harbour were isolated, but there was no time to be bored. In the mid-1900s, women woke at 4 a.m. to cook breakfast, and their days were filled with preserving fish, doing laundry, and tending the garden and children. They kept vinegar plants to treat fevers and headaches, and drained myrrh bladders—gummy resin from fir trees—to heal wounds. Before bed, Stu said,

shed. A hundred metres or so down the shoreline, we climbed aboard the skiff and steamed over to Round Harbour, where Stu and Esther come each summer. We hauled the coolers and water to their cabin, which had two serviceable bedrooms, a boat-house the size of a double-car garage and a large dock, and Stu made a fire in a small stove in the corner of the living room.

Esther set out a lunch of cold roast chicken, macaroni and spinach salads and slabs of sourdough bread. She seemed embarrassed she hadn't made the food herself but said she'd

been too busy; the previous day, she had driven about 90 kilometres to Gander for a doctor's appointment.

Stu pointed out the spot at the end of Round Harbour where fishermen ran three schooners ashore when the fishery collapsed. It was a small beach, buffered by shrubs and trees. Logs lay across the sand, but there was no trace of those doomed boats.

Around the perimeter of Round Harbour, the trees were thick and green, and there hardly looked to be space for a trail, let alone houses. Little more than 50 years earlier, people would have sat around the kitchen table of their tiny cabins, eating chicken they raised themselves, or fish they caught. When they moved to the mainland and started working for a large logging company, it was not merely their trade that changed. They lost their gardens and boats. They lost access to the water, so they had to buy more food. They had to buy land and perhaps take out a mortgage to build a house. "Moving," Esther said,

"probably tore the soul right out of you." It was hardest for the older people, like her parents.

AFTER LUNCH, I asked Esther if others were nostalgic about the place and had forgotten how hard it had been to live on Fair Island. She stopped loading up the cooler, turned and said, "Yes." She paused but didn't elaborate. Then she went back to her packing.

Around 2 p.m., we closed up the cabin, loaded the skiff and unfastened it from the wharf. As Round Harbour passed out of view, Esther said, as if to the wind, "Yeah, that's our cabin. I call it our memory cabin."

The rain pelted our faces as we made our way back. With no cover, Stu squinted and steeled himself against the weather. He liked to slow down and point out various sights on the way—there's Little Sugar Loaf, he said of a nubby rock poking out of the water—but Esther knew it was getting cold.

"It's beginning to rain harder, dear. Bring us home." **R**

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POWER IN MUSIC

You sing the blues to lose the blues. You lift the
burden by transferring it into a song.

WILLIE NELSON

A bold new treatment for strokes
saves time—and lives

Unlocking Paralysis

BY LISA FITTERMAN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON GORDON

MACY MILLS LIES ON a stretcher in the emergency department of Toronto Western Hospital as doctors and nurses hover over her. The 38-year-old triathlete and mother of three, who gave birth to her youngest child only five months ago, is paralyzed.

*For Macy Mills,
Mr. Clean was
available in
the nick of time.*



Just an hour earlier, Mills was driving to her older children's school to volunteer at their sports day, when a dull headache suddenly turned into a drill burrowing into one spot in her brain, sharp, hot, insistent. Overcome by pain and numb along her left side, she relied on instinct to swerve the car into a parking space and, after her mobile phone dropped to the floor, lean on the horn for help. Now Mills knows she had a stroke.

A CT scan shows that, like the majority of strokes, hers was ischemic (a clot is blocking the arterial flow of blood to her brain), as opposed to hemorrhagic (which involves a ruptured blood vessel). In Mills's case, it is a large clot on the right, which is why the left side of her body is affected (each side of the body is controlled by the opposite side of the brain). Dr. Richard Farb, a neuroradiologist at the hospital, asks Mills's husband, Wes, to sign consent forms for a procedure that has not yet been tested in Canada.

Officially called an endovascular thrombectomy with a stent retriever—a tiny, cage-like wire mesh tube attached to a catheter—the technique is able to clean out an artery in 40 minutes or less, which has earned it the nickname Mr. Clean. Its first trials in Germany and Switzerland, which began in 2010, have proved promising. Though Farb and his colleagues have tried mul-

tiple thrombectomy techniques over the years, he has yet to attempt this particular process using a stent retriever. Now, on June 15, 2011, the doctor is suggesting that Mills become the first Canadian subject.

What choice do I have? she thinks. She tries to nod and say, "Do what you have to."

A local anaesthetic is administered and quickly takes effect. Within minutes, Mills feels Farb puncturing a tiny hole in the femoral artery near her groin. He then carefully threads a catheter containing the stent up through her vascular system to the artery that feeds her brain, relying on radiographic imaging on a nearby screen to guide him. At the opening of the artery, the catheter is retracted, and Mills feels some pressure—it's as though someone is pinching her brain. That sensation is caused by the stent, which has opened to envelop and contain the clot within the mesh.

"When is this going to be over?" she asks. It already is. Farb gently extricates the stent, which now contains the clot, pulling out the device the same way it went in. From start to finish, the entire operation lasted less than two hours. "Try to move," Farb says. Mills lightly flexes the fingers of her left hand, which, three hours ago, could not hold on to her phone. Soon she is pumping breast milk in the intensive care unit and feeling very, very lucky.

THREE AND A HALF years later, the Canadian Mr. Clean trial, which involved 316 patients, ends early because it's clear it's already a success. (Mills, it should be noted, was not a participant in the trial. In her case, Farb and his colleagues used the device because they believed it would provide the best chance of rapidly and safely clearing the clot that was impeding blood flow to her brain.)

The procedure has been approved since 2011 in Europe and North America as a last-ditch strategy for stroke victims when other options prove fruitless. And since late 2014, it's also been used as the first course of treatment in North American and European hospitals that are stroke-designated facilities. In that time, endovascular thrombectomy with stent retriever has doubled the survival rate, with just one patient death in every 10. And the survivors are able to pick up their lives where they left off.

Every two seconds, statistics show, someone somewhere around the globe is having a stroke. Many may not realize it. They may feel dizzy for a few seconds or lose track of what they were saying but then feel better. Consider the number of stroke victims left paralyzed or unable to speak. Of the esti-

mated 15 million people worldwide who suffer a stroke each year, about five million die and six million are left permanently disabled. The combined number of deaths from AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria totals more than three million, much less than the stroke death rate.

It's no surprise, then, that the mantra in the stroke universe is, "Time is brain"—neuro shorthand to remind specialists that, in each minute after a

stroke occurs, the brain will lose 1.9 million neurons, 14 billion synapses and 12 kilometres' worth of axonal fibres if they were strung out in a line. A brain affected by an ischemic stroke can lose 3.6 years' worth of neurons each hour.

Dr. Timo Krings, the program director of neuroradiology at Toronto Western, puts it this way: "Before, surgical stroke treatment was a gamble. Anything we tried took at least two hours. Now we can see patients starting to speak again and move their limbs while they're still on the operating table. And it's fast. We did one surgery in 14 minutes.

"I don't say this lightly," he continues. "Mr. Clean is a game changer."

EVER SINCE THE drug tPA, or tissue plasminogen activator, was introduced



"A lot of people were skeptical, but then the results spoke for themselves," says Dr. Vitor Mendes Pereira.

in the mid-1990s as a clot-buster, it has been the stroke treatment of choice. But because it must be administered no more than four and a half hours after a stroke occurs, tPA can be used in only a limited number of cases and may take hours to work. Surgeons have tried other devices as alternatives or complements—anything that could open a vessel more quickly to get rid of the blockage. They all looked familiar, like a chimney sweep brush in miniature or a tiny butterfly net.

“It got to the point that at an international conference seven years ago, a new catch device was presented at every lecture in the stroke session,” Krings recalls. “I was moderating, and at the end, I said, ‘If any of you were right, we’d have only one.’”

Around that same time, German neuroradiologist Dr. Hans Henkes was working on a patient who’d had a stroke that left a clot in her middle cerebral artery. He decided to use a device he’d co-developed for the stent-assisted coil treatment of aneurysms. When he pulled out the stent that was keeping the artery open as he operated, the clot came with it, intact.

Not long after that, Henkes mentioned it at a conference to a colleague, who agreed that his discovery was promising. In 2010, a trial began in Europe, with Dr. Vitor Mendes Pereira, then the head of interventional neuroradiology at the University of Geneva, as one of the principal global investi-

gators. Researchers learned that they needed to be working within a vessel that was at least two millimetres in diameter and that the approach was not effective on hemorrhagic strokes, or “bleeders.” While they initially thought they had only a short window in which to clean out a blockage, they have since learned that each case depends on the quality and duration of the “collaterals,” where the brain temporarily compensates for a blocked artery by finding a detour for the blood to flow. That period can last minutes, hours or possibly even a day.

Pereira’s first patient, for example, was flown in from a French hospital in the Alps. A few hours earlier, the woman had suffered a stroke after giving birth; while in labour, she’d had to reduce medication she was taking to regulate a mechanical valve in her heart. It took 40 minutes to remove the clot. The patient was able to speak while still on the operating-room table.

“We were pioneers,” Pereira recalls. The doctor moved to Toronto in August 2014, attracted by the prospect of collaborating with colleagues such as Krings and having more time to do research. He’s now affiliated with the University of Toronto and works out of an office at Toronto Western, though he still holds his title at the University of Geneva. “A lot of people—neurologists and more conservative neurosurgeons—were skeptical, but then the results spoke for themselves,” he says.

IN OCTOBER 2014, Wolfgang Kahnke, a retired toolmaker, was gearing up for the 100-odd-kilometre drive from his home in Kitchener, Ont., to Toronto Western, where he would meet with the surgeon who'd replaced his knee two years earlier. For Kahnke, then 71, it was a checkup, nothing more, and he arrived several hours early, hoping they could fit him in. He and his wife, Karin, were planning to attend an Oktoberfest dinner that night.

As he waited for the surgeon in the examination room, he felt something humming in his head. It wasn't painful, exactly, but it was uncomfortable.

Walk it off, he told himself. But he couldn't move.

SOME COMMON SIGNS THAT A PERSON IS HAVING A STROKE:

- Sudden weakness and/or numbness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden trouble speaking and confusion
- Sudden vision problems
- Sudden severe or unusual headaches
- Sudden loss of balance or dizziness
- Sudden droopiness in the face

If you notice any of these symptoms, call emergency services immediately.

When an emergency CT scan showed a five-centimetre clot blocking the main artery at the back of his neck, Kahnke was whisked to the operating room within the hour. The next day, he was able to take a shower unaided. As he stood under the spray, he thought, I've never felt so alive.

Mr. Clean, his doctors told him, was what had saved his life or prevented him from becoming paralyzed from the neck down. For Kahnke, it meant being able to play Santa Claus last Christmas for the children of employees at his former company.

"I make a pretty good Santa," he says, gesturing at his white hair and beard. "Only I'm not so big!"

FOR MACY MILLS, now 43 and a private banker with an international financial services company, the only visible reminders of her stroke are the three pills she takes every evening: a beta blocker, an ACE inhibitor and a blood thinner. These medications were prescribed when tests showed that the apex of her heart is composed of scar tissue where blood can pool, which increases the risk of clots forming. Mills also now has an internal defibrillator, the result of suffering a cardiac arrest this past May. Fit and driven, the former triathlete chafes at not being able to run a four-minute kilometre anymore. But she is grateful that, thanks to Mr. Clean, she's able to be there for her family. **R**

For more than three decades, singing siblings Kate and Anna McGarrigle were a captivating folk duo, adored by anglophones and francophones alike. It all started at home, with their father's love of music.

Sister Act

BY ANNA AND JANE McGARRIGLE
FROM *MOUNTAIN CITY GIRLS*

*Anna (left) and Kate
busking in Montreal
as teenagers in 1961.*



IN THE EARLY SUMMER of 2012, a melodious horde—which included Emmylou Harris and Bruce Cockburn—came together in Toronto to celebrate the life and work of Kate McGarrigle. The singer-songwriter, who had died two years earlier of clear cell sarcoma, a rare form of cancer, was best known as a linchpin of a great North American musical dynasty. The youngest daughter in a family of three girls, Kate, along with her middle sister, Anna, started performing as a teenager in the early 1960s. The two wrote enchanting, candid folk tunes that were covered by artists such as Linda Ronstadt and Judy Collins, and, in 1974, secured them a recording deal. Their songs—including a memorable version of “The Log Driver’s Waltz” that appeared in a now-iconic 1979 animated short produced by the National Film Board of Canada—became part of the country’s national tapestry. Music is second nature for the McGarrigle clan: Anna’s children, Lily and Sylvan Lanken, are singer-songwriters; Kate’s two children, Rufus and Martha Wainwright (the offspring from her tumultuous relationship with American troubadour Loudon Wainwright III), are both singular pop talents, and Rufus also composes operas.

During a panel discussion prior to the Toronto concert, Anna shared stories about their unconventional relatives—anecdotes that have since co-

alesced into a book co-written with her eldest sister, Jane, also an accomplished musician and industry professional, who had performed and recorded with Kate and Anna. More than just a family memoir, *Mountain City Girls* is an open-hearted tribute to a musical childhood in Quebec and to the gifted sister who passed away too soon.

JANE: In the summer of 1947, our family pulled up stakes and moved out of Montreal up to Saint-Sauveur, a picturesque village in Quebec’s lower Laurentians. Though mostly populated by succeeding generations of the original French-Canadian settlers, Saint-Sauveur has always had a sprinkling of outsiders, some living there year-round and others visiting seasonally. First came Scandinavians attracted by the skiing; then city people in the summer for the cool mountain air. A dozen or so wealthy Anglo-Quebec families acquired properties on riverbanks and mountaintops.

Our father, Frank McGarrigle, had bought an acre of land there back in 1933. He’d first arrived in the Laurentians in 1929 or 1930 for a year-long stay at the Royal Edward Institute’s sanitarium in Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts, where he was being treated for tuberculosis.

Before our parents married in 1935, Daddy had already begun building a house on his lot. When we moved

there more than 10 years later, it was still a work-in-progress. We doubt he had planned it to be a full-time residence, but over time our circumstances had changed, as they do, and there it was, a place to land. Mountain air was thought to be better for our father's chronic lung problems, and country living was cheap. On the downside, our mother was a city girl who didn't care for the country or country people and would probably not have agreed to move there had she known it would be forever.

Frank had come into the marriage with a Gibson arch-top guitar, and not long after, they acquired a Chickering piano. Our father was a natural musician, untrained but blessed with a golden ear, and could play almost anything on the piano. It's a familiar scene in drawing-room comedies of the 1930s and '40s: in the middle of a party, a man is seated at the piano, banging out a song, surrounded by people waving drinks and singing along—that was our dad at the keys.

At the time of our arrival in Saint-Sauveur, the most recent newcomers were veterans or displaced persons of the Second World War who had come to the Laurentians looking

for a new beginning. For whatever reason, many of the outsiders who'd migrated to Saint-Sauveur before and after the war were artistic in temperament or decidedly eccentric, or both. In no time at all, Frank found his inner bohemian and gravitated right to them, and our mother, Gaby Latrémouille, followed.

In the early 1990s, toward the end of her life, Gaby spent most of her

time sitting on the sofa in the sunroom of that house in Saint-Sauveur. She would stare out the bay windows at ever-mounting snow berms left by the plow and say, with some asperity, "Can someone please tell me why we're here?" Almost 70 years after we first moved to the country, the question could be asked, "Why are we still here?"

For we are still very much in the old family homestead, with its ghosts and memories that have infected our children and their children. We're clearly here because we need to be.

JANE: Music was our father's abiding passion. Only someone who lived with Frank could grasp how completely it engaged him. Our uncle Earl "Chick" Latrémouille, who lived in the flat below ours in the 1940s in

“
OUR FATHER
DIDN'T READ
MUSIC, SO HE
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HE KNEW,
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NEW ONES AND
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MELODIES.
”

Montreal, shared his recollections with our sister Kate 60 years later, about life at one remove from the McGarrigle household.

From Kate's notes:

You see, he had to be at the Ferry Command for work by nine, and right up until five minutes before nine, I could hear him playing the piano. After work, at 5 o'clock, when he got home, onto the piano, and he didn't stop till everybody was in bed. At midnight, I'd hear the piano stop, then a shoe would drop, then the other, and it was all over until the next morning! Day after day after day, and on the weekends, well, let me tell you, Kitty Kate, on the weekends....

If we can believe Uncle Chick—and there's no reason not to—Daddy was on the piano *every waking hour* in those days. (We were young kids at the time: I was born in 1941, Anna in 1944, and Kate in 1946.) He didn't read music, so he played songs he knew, worked out new ones and improvised melodies. I think music was a solace for my father, and I believe my mother understood this; she complained about a lot of things, but never about Frank's music.

Our long-suffering relatives soon had more music coming their way.

Our parents got me a little toy piano when I was two or three, but I showed more interest in my father's instrument. After we moved to the country, Kate and Anna and I took lessons at École Marie-Rose from Grade 1 on. The nuns who taught us piano and *solfège* (how to sing on pitch) were a cut above the other teachers. All of them were pretty decent to us, and they were probably happy to have

students with some aptitude and parents who made them practise. The house in Saint-Sauveur took on more instruments as the years passed.

ANNA: In lieu of a family Bible, we had our father's old Gibson guitar, the body of which was inscribed with the names of his and Gaby's friends.

Later, Jane adopted

the tradition of scratching important names into the soft spruce top. She enthusiastically recorded a significant arrival on the music scene by adding his name in block letters on its back: ELVIS. There wasn't much free space left on the instrument when it came time for Kate and me to add our friends or a favourite musician, but I did manage to gouge the name of guitarist Duane Eddy into the wood, spelling it phonetically in

IT WAS ON
A BATTERED
GIBSON GUITAR
THAT OUR
FATHER
SHOWED HIS
THREE GIRLS
THEIR FIRST
CHORDS.



(Clockwise from top left) Frank and Gaby on their wedding day in 1935; the couple clowning around that same year; Gaby and a young Jane in Lachine, Que., in 1943.



the French syllables I was familiar with: DOUANE. In French, “*douane*” means “customs,” as in customs officer. I felt like an idiot when the mistake was pointed out, and I struck a line through the O, drawing even more attention to it, a reminder of a misspelled youth.

It was on this battered artifact that our father showed his three girls their first chords. The G was the first learned, made simple by placing just one finger on the high E string at the third fret and strumming the four high strings. Our fingers weren't long enough to reach the two other strings you needed to depress to make a full G chord—the low E string on the third fret and the A string on the second fret.

JANE: The Chickering piano was eventually given away to the pastor of a poor parish somewhere in northern Quebec, a fellow TB sufferer Daddy had met on the ward. It was replaced by an 1880s Steinway that, remarkably, still holds its tuning unless it's really pounded (Rufus Wainwright, I'm looking at you!).

ANNA: The first song our daddy taught us was “Stand Up and Sing for Your Father an Old-Time Tune.”

*Won't you stop all that nonsense
you're singing*

Morning, night and noon

*For I'm tired of all your ditties
of your moon and spoon and June*

*Won't you stand up and sing for
your father an old-time tune.*

In our home in Saint-Sauveur, we kids stood on the long piano bench on either side of him, belting it out

as the song's lyrics indicated. Jane taught us all to sing harmony. This was still pre-Elvis, when the hit parade was full of songs sung by trios of women, such as the Andrews and McGuire Sisters. Our earliest effort in three-part harmony was “I Don't Wanna See You Cryin',” the B-side of “Mr. Sandman,” a hit for The

Chordettes in 1954.

ANNA: After 11 years in the Laurentians, our mother decreed that we would move back to the city. Staying in Saint-Sauveur with all of us in different schools and different localities was unthinkable. So, near the end of 1958, we moved back to Montreal—specifically, the Town of Mount Royal, an area built on the flat land northeast of the mountain.

“
JOAN BAEZ
WAS YOUNG
AND BEAUTIFUL,
WITH LONG
HAIR, AND
PERFORMED
BAREFOOT.
WE WANTED
TO BE HER.”

In 1960, when Joan Baez released her debut recording on the Vanguard label, she became a role model for many teenage girls, including Kate and me. She was young and beautiful, with long hair, and performed barefoot, even in the most formal settings. We wanted to be her. Most folk artists of the day played guitars with a round sound hole, with either nylon or light-gauge steel strings; they had a natural wood finish, and C.F. Martin made the really nice ones. These were the kind of guitars that Kate and I wanted.

But our mother and grandfather Arthur, both of whom knew nothing about guitars, wanted to surprise us. The pair of them went down to Craig Street near Saint-Laurent, in Montreal, where the pawnbrokers were. These places also sold cheap new guitars.

On Christmas morning in 1961, two telltale trapezoid-shaped boxes lay under the tree, the kind of cardboard box inexpensive guitars come in. Gaby and our grandfather looked on proudly, barely containing their excitement as Kate and I tore the wrapping paper off the boxes. Perhaps knowing what was coming, our father stepped out of the room.

The guitars were brand new, dark-varnished with a sunburst section in the centre and f-holes where the sound comes out. The strings lay a half inch above the fretboard. It was impossible to hold them down and make a chord. We didn't hide our disdain for these crude instruments and grumbled, "These aren't the kind of guitars we want! They're Western," and walked away. Our grandfather

could not believe what ingrates Gaby had raised. We exchanged them for cheap, blond, nylon-stringed guitars.

Kate and I attended the Town of Mount Royal Catholic High/École secondaire catholique de Ville Mont-Royal. The late-1950s school, a rectangular box with a sage-green curtain-wall facade, was actually

two schools: one English, one French, with a boys' side and a girls' side, which made it seem more like four schools.

In the fall of 1961, Michèle Forest was in Grade 10 on the French side. Michèle was the kind of girl one immediately noticed. She was the class clown: animated and very funny. While wandering the corridors one day, she heard music. She followed the sound, the way

“
SHE FOLLOWED
THE SOUND
AND
DISCOVERED
KATE PLAYING
PIANO AND
SINGING,
SURROUNDED
BY ADMIRERS.”



(Top) The McGarrigle sisters lounging in the Laurentians after church in 1948; (bottom) Anna and Kate with their parents at their cottage in Saint-Sauveur in 1954.



one scans a rainbow looking for the pot of gold, and discovered Kate—in Grade 10 on the English side—in a small room playing the school upright piano and singing in what Michèle described as a pure, high voice, surrounded by a clutch of admiring students. The two soon got together outside of school to work up songs.

Michèle possessed a knowledge of French popular music that Kate and I did not share. Most of the compositions we knew were school-yard rounds or lovely hymns. Jane had taught us some quaint country tunes, but in 1961 we were looking for songs like the ones Joan Baez had done on her debut recording.

Before long, a trio was formed, with Michèle on lead and Kate and me on guitars and harmonies. The first songs we learned were “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,” “Greenfields”—an eco-anthem made famous by the Brothers Four—and the Appalachian complaint “Every Night When the Sun Goes Down.”

Michèle remembers us taking the bus over to Côte-des-Neiges, guitars in tow (we didn’t own cases), and going to the bar in the Berkeley Hotel

on Sherbrooke West, a hangout with preppy McGill students who’d just come from a college football game. Our performance was impromptu. After finding a good spot to stand where we would be seen, Michèle burst into song while Kate and I followed on the guitars. There was no stage, no mics, and no one seemed to care that we were underage.

“

KATE AND I
WERE BORN
OPTIMISTS, AND
NEITHER OF US
WAS PREPARED
FOR THE BAD
NEWS WE
WERE ABOUT
TO HEAR.

”

ANNA: On May 30 of 1965, in the evening, our father drove from Saint-Sauveur to Montreal. We were all a little surprised to see him. I had recently completed my first year as a full-time student at the École des beaux-arts and was working as a temp. Kate, seeking summer employment, had begun riding the train down-

town with me to check out job prospects. This was Frank’s busy rental season, but he hadn’t been feeling well and was probably seeking out the security of his family. He retired to bed, and apart from getting him a cup of tea and keeping the noise level down, I don’t remember any of us paying much attention to him. Looking back, I recall that his face was greyer, but he displayed no outward signs of distress.

The following morning, when Kate and I went to kiss him goodbye before leaving for the train, he handed us five dollars and asked us to get him a mickey of Demerara rum while we were downtown. "It's what keeps me alive," he said. And he was out of the stuff.

Kate met me when I got off work at 5 p.m., and after picking up his rum at a downtown liquor store, we headed for Central Station, taking the short-cut through Eaton's, across the main floor. While we were there, the bottle of rum Kate was carrying slipped out the bottom of the brown paper bag and broke on the floor. There wasn't time for us to go back to the liquor store, or we would miss our train.

When we got home, there was a note on our apartment door telling us to ring the neighbour's bell. The woman who lived across the hall told us that our father had phoned our mother at work at the Marconi Corporation, the telecommunications company where she was a secretary, asking her to come home immediately. An ambulance had been called, and because our father couldn't breathe in the reclining position, he'd ridden

in the seat upfront beside the driver, leaving no place for our mother. The attendants had told her she would have to take a cab to the Queen Mary Veterans' Hospital, where my father was an outpatient—lingering issues related to TB meant he required periodic medical care.

Back at the apartment, the two of us waited anxiously for word from our mother. It was some time before

“

KATE AND
ANNA AND I
ARE SO MUCH
OUR FATHER'S
DAUGHTERS,
SO EASILY
TRANSPORTED
BY DREAMS
AND FANTASY.

”

we heard the familiar sound of the heavy door in the lobby clicking shut. Kate and I were born optimists, and neither of us was prepared for what we were about to hear. We ran out to the landing and saw our mother climbing the stairs to our first-floor apartment. She looked straight at us through thick tears and said

dramatically, "*C'est fini.*" The words were delivered as if this was the last scene in a sad film. Our mother didn't like to be the bearer of bad news, so she charged Kate with calling Jane, now based in San Francisco with her husband, Dave, who was working at IBM.

JANE: Most of that week is a blur except for two clear recollections. On my first day home, I spent an hour alone in the room at the

funeral parlour where my father was laid out. It was unquiet and disturbing in the space, and I felt a prickly sensory discomfort all through my body and wondered if it was his restless soul not yet settled in its place in eternity. I remained by my father's side but was immensely relieved when someone came to spell me off.

The other memory is of an evening after the funeral, when Gaby and Kate and Anna and I went up to Saint-Sauveur. Some people dropped by, and we were all in the living room listening to Aunt Anna, our father's sister, play the piano. We were singing along when the phone closest to the living room started to ring, with its loud, insistent peal. Gaby asked Aunt Anna to stop the music, as she feared the caller would find us disrespectful to Frank, having music when we were supposed to be



Reader's
digest
**EDITORS'
CHOICE**

in deep mourning. That started a brief, heated argument about what our father would have wanted or what he would have done in the circumstances, all this time the phone still ringing off the wall. We did finally stop playing, and someone answered, but I knew Frank would have kept singing. Death would not have trumped music.

It was a long time before I was able to think about

my father without crying, and even now, 50 years later, certain memories of him fill my eyes with tears. Kate and Anna and I are so much his daughters, carrying our emotions and irrational superstitions right at the surface, so easily transported by dreams and fantasy. He was the master dreamer who had big dreams for us, and it is unutterably sad that he didn't live to see how far Kate and Anna took music, his great passion. **R**

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THE GOLDEN RULE

Almost everything will work again if you unplug
it for a few minutes, including you.

ANNE LAMOTT

@ Work

THANKS FOR THE TIP



I WORK AS A historical interpreter. Visitors often ask me about the signal gun, which we fire every day. Most of the time, they want to know where to find it or how they can get the best picture of it. One day, though, an elderly woman walked up to me and asked, “When do they fire the noonday gun?” We stared at each other awkwardly for a moment, then she quickly left.

LUKE AHERN, *Dartmouth, N.S.*

DIFFICULT PEOPLE

Complaint from a design client: “That letter ‘i’ looks a lot like an upside-down exclamation mark.”

clientsfromhell.net

A TALL ORDER

Client: “We need you to log in to the YouTube and make all our company videos viral.”

clientsfromhell.net

A PANEL OF DOCTORS were asked for their opinions concerning a proposal to build a new wing to their hospital:

- The allergists voted to scratch it.
- The neurologists thought the administration had a lot of nerve.
- The podiatrists thought it was a step forward.
- The ophthalmologists considered the idea short-sighted.
- The plastic surgeons felt it would give the building the facelift it so desperately needed.
- The pathologists yelled, “Over my dead body.”
- The surgeons decided to wash their hands of the whole thing.
- The cardiologists didn’t have the heart to say no.

guy-sports.com

Are you in need of some professional motivation? A work anecdote could get you a free year’s subscription. To submit your stories, see rd.ca/joke for details.

GET SMART!

13 Things You Should Know About Staying in Hotels

BY TIM JOHNSON



1 It pays to be nice. Room assignments—including upgrades—are often still made by actual people, usually front desk managers. If they associate your name with a friendly face, you may find yourself in a spacious corner suite on your next visit.

2 “Ask and you will receive,” says Hilary Lewis, a housekeeping manager at Hotel Arts in Calgary. Most hotels will be happy to provide extra items, like DVD players, microwaves and even fridges, at no extra charge if they have them on hand.

3 Loyalty counts, so stick with one chain. Frequent travellers can achieve a preferred status level, which comes with privileges—special amenities, freebies and access to “hotel within the hotel” areas that include perks such as private check-in and free breakfast or happy hour drinks.

4 At some hotels, bedspreads aren’t washed or even changed between guests. If you’d rather not deal with the uncertainty, toss the comforter in the corner, wash your hands and call for a replacement. ➤➤

5 That said, the filthiest thing in the room might be lying on your bedside table. In 2012, researchers at Ontario's Guelph University swabbed surfaces in 54 hotel rooms across the country. They found that TV remotes were covered in more bacteria than previous studies had measured on public-toilet surfaces.

6 Trust the concierge as a source for local intel. "These highly trained professionals are the eyes and ears of the community," says Fairmont brand president Jennifer Fox.

7 Don't leave everything until check-in. If you have preferences for where you'd like to sleep, or special requests (like a hypoallergenic room), call ahead. "Earlier is better, but even if you call the morning of, you'll give us time to make it happen," says Lewis.

8 If you use third-party sell-off sites like Expedia, Hotwire or Priceline, you'll snag bargain rates, but you'll get what you paid for. You'll likely end up with a less-than-ideal room—lower floors, bad views.

9 Booking late can get you the best deals. For same-day reservations, Peter Yesawich, the vice-chairman of international travel marketing services firm MMGY Global, recommends using Hoteltonight.com. Or

do it the old-fashioned way and call the front desk. If the place isn't full, you'll often get a discount.

10 Tipping lets you express gratitude and ensures you'll get good service again. Experts recommend giving bellhops up to \$5 per bag; valets should get \$2 to \$3 for retrieving your car; housekeepers should be left \$2 to \$5 daily; and concierges should be rewarded for exceptional service (\$10 to \$20).

11 Some of the best offers are hidden. Hotels will occasionally give out discounts and perks to guests who post Tripadvisor reviews or fill out hotel surveys. You can also ask about "recontact" lists, where special deals and packages are sent to patrons via email.

12 Stars sometimes lie—ratings systems vary widely between countries. For example, in Italy, a hotel can earn five stars by simply having a 24-hour reception desk, rooms that start at 16 square metres and receptionists who speak three languages. A single star is awarded for changing the sheets once a week.

13 If you're tempted to take home a robe or towel, don't. Some hotels have begun to include radio-frequency chips in order to track stolen items.

R

That's Outrageous!

SENDING OUT AN SOS

BY DANIEL VIOLA

STILL WATERS RUN DEEP

To catch a fish, you must think like a fish. One man in Loxley, England, inadvertently took this strategy a bit too far in August when, on his way to do some angling at a local pond, he accidentally drove his car into the water. Not one to get too excited, the unflappable octogenarian simply sat back, lit his pipe and relaxed—he even had a chat with a farmer who had waded in. Firefighters and paramedics soon arrived and carried the man back to land, where he was unanimously declared the catch of the day.

RUNAWAY RODENT

The intruder was somewhere in the house. Paul Lim was sure of it. And as a member of the police force in Eagle, Idaho, it was his duty to help those in need—no matter the danger. On a Wednesday night in June, Officer Lim advanced through a woman's suburban home, wielding a broomstick. His task? Locating



and removing a rogue squirrel. Suddenly, there it was: a flash of brown fur! After a 20-minute

chase, Lim was able to shepherd the beady-eyed terror out a door. The case was closed, but it had proved a tough nut to crack.

RIISING FROM THE ASHES

Guests at a house party in Phoenix were likely filled with wonder when muffled cries began emanating from the chimney late one night in July. But rather than the “Ho, ho, ho!” of jolly old St. Nick, what they heard was more along the lines of “Help! Help! Help!” A 23-year-old attendee who’d been locked out of the party as a prank had tried to make his way back inside through the chimney but had become stuck. A team of 30 firefighters showed up, and after about half an hour of working with a sledgehammer and drills, rescuers were able to give the reveller the best early Christmas gift of all: his freedom.

MORE GREAT READS THIS MONTH

Rd.ca/connect



HEALTH

Ward Off the Winter Blues

How to brighten your days—and fight sadness, low energy and weight gain.

FOOD

6 Beverages to Keep You Cozy This Season



HEALTH

One-Minute Health Checks

Gain insight into your well-being with quick self-exams you can do at home.



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 Newsletter

SHUTTERSTOCK

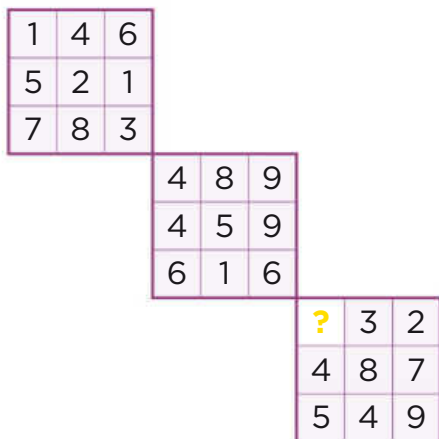
Brain teasers

Challenge yourself by solving these puzzles and mind stretchers, then check your answers on page 172.

BY MARCEL DANESI

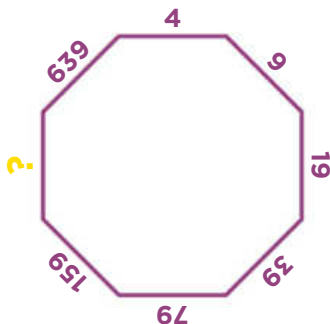
CASCADE (Easy)

What number belongs in the empty cell?



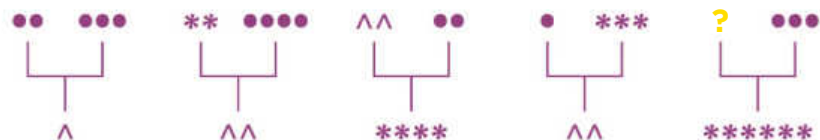
ALL AROUND THE OCTAGON (Easy)

If the numbers surrounding this octagon make a clockwise sequence, which number is missing from the left side?



SYMBOLISM (Difficult)

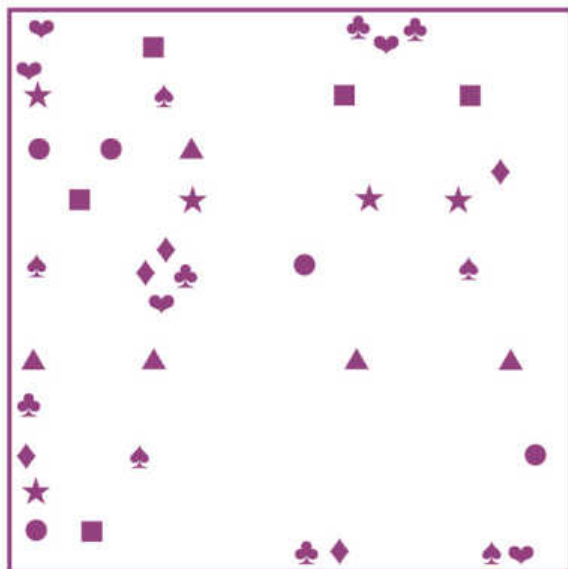
Which symbol ($\wedge$, $*$ or $\bullet$) and how many repetitions of it are missing from the last figure?



EQUAL DISTRIBUTION

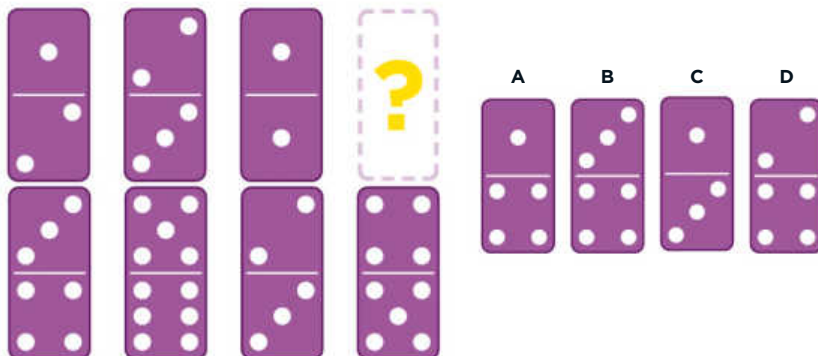
(Difficult)

Divide this rectangle into five sections by drawing three straight lines. Draw them so that every section contains one of each of the eight different shapes.



PAIR UP *(Moderately difficult)*

Each of these pairs of dominoes follows the same rule. Among the options given, which domino is the best fit for the fourth pair?



Trivia Quiz

BY PAUL PAQUET

1. Which country was the last major land mass to be settled by humans?

2. What pair of actors won the MTV Movie Award for Best Kiss four times in a row?

3. In which century did Mongolian warlord Kublai Khan live out his entire life?

4. Which role earned Helen Mirren both her first Oscar and her first Tony Award?

5. In the Quran, Nuh builds Safina Nuh. What does the Bible call him?

6. Which country grants knighthoods in the Order of the Elephant?

7. Now considered a classic, what movie earned Stanley Kubrick a Razzie nomination for Worst Director?

8. Starbucks holds a trademark for the Italian word for “20.” What is it?

9. Which famous brothers and inventors flew together on the same plane only once, in 1910?

10. What’s the term for winds that score a 10 on the Beaufort scale?

11. What nickname is used to refer to New Zealand’s national men’s basketball team?

12. What junk food-loving detective drives a Volkswagen Bug around Santa Teresa, Calif.?

13. Does our sun have more of its lifespan behind it or ahead of it?

14. What sexually transmitted disease plagues approximately half of Australia’s wild koalas?



15. *What war’s last shots were fired in the Bering Sea in 1865?*

ANSWERS: 1. New Zealand, by the Maori in about 1250–1300. 2. Robert Pattinson and Kristen Stewart (of the *Twilight* series). 3. The 13th century. 4. Queen Elizabeth II. 5. Noah. 6. Denmark. 7. *The Shining*. 8. Venti. 9. The Wright brothers. 10. A storm. 11. The Tall Blacks. 12. Kinsey Millhone, in novels by Sue Grafton. 13. Ahead of it. It’s about 4.5 billion years old and has another five billion to go before it’s expected to become a red giant and then a white dwarf. 14. Chlamydia. 15. The American Civil War.

Sudoku

BY IAN RIENSCHÉ

(Difficult)

8			5	3	7			2
					8	3		
	7	3		9		5		
4	5							9
3		8				1		7
9							2	8
		4		5		7	6	
		5	1					
7			6	4	3			5

TO SOLVE THIS PUZZLE...

You have to put a number from 1 to 9 in each square so that:

- every horizontal row and vertical column contains all nine numerals (1-9) without repeating any of them;
- each of the 3 x 3 boxes has all nine numerals, none repeated.

SOLUTION

5	6	2	5	4	9	1	8	7
5	7	2	8	1	5	6	9	3
1	9	7	6	5	8	4	3	2
8	2	5	6	3	7	1	4	9
7	1	5	2	4	1	6	8	3
6	5	9	1	8	7	2	5	4
4	8	5	9	6	2	5	7	1
9	7	3	8	1	4	6	2	5
2	1	4	6	7	3	5	9	8

Brainteasers:

Answers

(from page 169)

CASCADE

7. The whole numbers from 1 to 9 are placed in ascending order on the diagonal starting at the top left-hand corner and ending at the bottom right-hand corner.

ALL AROUND THE OCTAGON

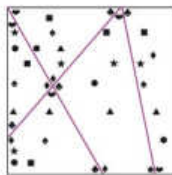
319. Starting at the top and moving clockwise, each number in the sequence is found by doubling the preceding number and adding 1. Or, if you prefer, the difference between a number and the one that precedes it is doubled with each step in the sequence.

SYMBOLISM

^^^ or **** or

Each ^ represents the number 5, each * represents 3, and each • represents 1. The symbols at the bottom of each figure are the sum of those at the top.

EQUAL DISTRIBUTION



PAIR UP

C. In each pair, if you add the dots in both halves of the top domino, their sum will be equal to the number of dots in the upper half of the bottom domino.



Word Power

Our language is full of terms and expressions related to time, which structures our lives and occupies our minds—especially when we're running late. Take a moment now to test your vocabulary.

BY ROB LUTES

1. **serotinal**—A: extremely tardy. B: of late summer. C: on a fixed schedule.
2. **fortnight**—A: two weeks. B: 40 days. C: four nights.
3. **coeval**—A: very young. B: of the same age. C: from the period prior to the Middle Ages.
4. **ephemeral**—A: lasting for a brief time. B: hourly. C: concerning the final years of life.
5. **vespers**—A: the sixth of the Christian canonical hours, occurring at dusk. B: time at sea. C: the longer months of the Gregorian calendar.
6. **preprandial**—A: before fall harvest. B: before dinner. C: before there were written records.
7. **cosmic year**—A: the distance travelled by light in one Earth year. B: the time it takes for the sun to orbit the centre of the galaxy. C: unit of time used in describing the history of the universe.
8. **summary**—A: slow. B: at high noon. C: without delay.
9. **chronometry**—A: the science of accurate time measurement. B: the art of telling time by the sky. C: the mechanics of clockmaking.
10. **hodiernal**—A: according to the body's internal clock. B: at the same time every day. C: relating to the present day.
11. **thitherto**—A: soon. B: within the time required to travel from one place to another. C: until that time.
12. **genethliac**—relating to: A: free time. B: the position of the stars at one's birth. C: old age.
13. **erstwhile**—A: future. B: former. C: current.
14. **protracted**—A: of excessive length. B: from time immemorial. C: happening over a 24-hour period.
15. **acronical**—A: occurring at sunset. B: crossing many time zones. C: pertaining to winter.

Answers

1. serotinal—[B] of late summer; as, The *serotinal* seed pods drifted on the breeze, and Nicolas sensed the coming autumn.

2. fortnight —[A] two weeks; as, Keahi had allotted himself a *fortnight* to tour the Maritimes, but now he wished he'd planned for a third week.

3. coeval—[B] of the same age; as, The house and the willow in the yard were *coeval*, the tree having been planted by the original builder.

4. ephemeral —[A] lasting for a brief time; as, The young nation was unstable due to a succession of *ephemeral* governments.

5. vespers—[A] the sixth of the Christian canonical hours, occurring at dusk; as, The altar was perfumed with incense at *vespers*.

6. preprandial—[B] before dinner; as, Anya put the casserole in the oven and took her *preprandial* stroll around the block.

7. cosmic year—[B] the time it takes for the sun to orbit the centre of the galaxy; as, The *cosmic year* is about 225 million terrestrial years long.

8. summary—[C] without delay; as, Margot's second-rate presentation to the board of directors earned her a *summary* dismissal.

9. chronometry—[A] the science of accurate time measurement; as, The development of the atomic clock was a major advance for *chronometry*.

10. hodiernal—[C] relating to the present day; as, Absorbed in the *hodiernal* demands of his art, Randy rarely planned for the future.

11. thitherto—[C] until that time; as, Chef Karoli popularized a unique blend of American and Asian cuisine that had not *thitherto* been tasted.

12. genethliac—[B] relating to the position of the stars at one's birth; as, After consulting a star chart, the local astrologer provided Kevin with encouraging *genethliac* information.

13. erstwhile—[B] former; as, The *erstwhile* friends had long since become bitter political rivals.

14. protracted—[A] of excessive length; as, The union knew it was in for a *protracted* dispute when the corporation refused arbitration.

15. acronical—[A] occurring at sunset; as, Watching the constellation Orion's *acronical* rising became a ritual during our family vacation.

VOCABULARY RATINGS

7-10: fair

11-12: good

13-15: excellent

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Quotes

BY CHRISTINA PALASSIO



**DID YOU REALLY
THINK I WAS GOING
TO JUST SIT THERE
AND LOOK PRETTY?
I HAVE A VOICE FOR
CHANGE, AND I'M
GOING TO USE IT!**

ASHLEY CALLINGBULL



They're two of the most important issues of our time: how we're dealing with people of colour, how we're dealing with the poor.

PAUL HAGGIS

THERE ARE WAYS OF SINGING IN ENGLISH THAT ARE NOT JUST THE SAME AS IN FRENCH. COEUR DE PIRATE



*I am on your Walk of Fame
in Toronto. My sense of
humour is Canadian.
But I can't vote.*

DONALD SUTHERLAND

Liking the Leafs is like having molten gold poured into your face. It's gold, but it's burning your face off. Does that make sense?

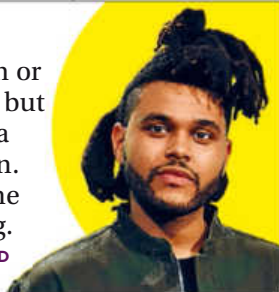
SEÁN CULLEN

**SLEEP IS LIKE MY
CAT. I CAN CALL
HIM BY HIS NAME,
BUT HE STILL
WON'T COME TO ME.**

SHANE KOYCZAN

I can never be Michael Jackson or do what he did, but he is definitely a good inspiration. I want to give the kids that feeling.

THE WEEKND



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HOLIDAY LIKE YOU MEAN IT



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